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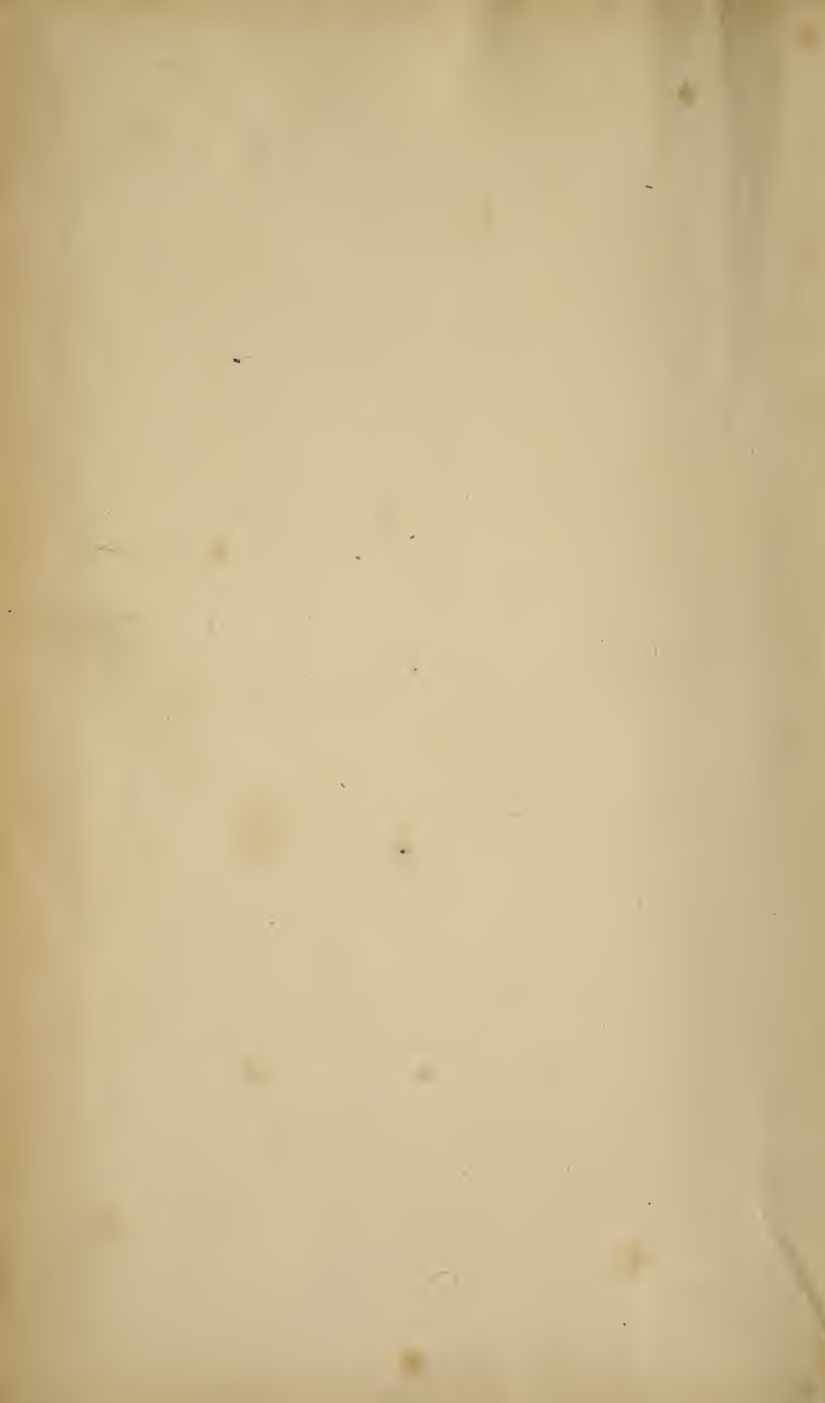
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THE

KING'S OWN BORDERERS.

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VOL. III.



THE  
KING'S OWN BORDERERS.

*A Military Romance.*

BY  
JAMES GRANT,

AUTHOR OF

"SECOND TO NONE," "THE ROMANCE OF WAR," "THE YELLOW FRIGATE,"  
ETC. ETC.

"Memories fast are thronging o'er me,  
Of the grand old fields of Spain;  
How he faced the charge of Junot,  
And the fight where Moore was slain.  
Oh the years of weary waiting  
For the glorious chance he sought,  
For the slowly ripened harvest  
That life's latest autumn brought."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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THE  
KING'S OWN BORDERERS.

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CHAPTER I.

PLAYING WITH FIRE.

“ Fraught with this fine intention, and well fenced  
In mail of proof—her purity of soul,  
She, for the future of her strength convinced,  
And that her honour was a rock or mole,  
Exceeding sagely from that hour dispensed  
With any kind of troublesome control;  
But whether Julia to the task was equal,  
Is that which must be gathered in the sequel.”

BYRON.

For two other entire days the rain continued to pour as it only pours in the Peninsula during the wet season, and our travellers were compelled to keep close within the doors of the Villa de Maciera. Could Quentin have lifted the veil that hides the future, and foreseen the turmoil and danger in which this unexpected delay would eventually involve him, he would certainly have made some vigorous efforts to procure horses or mules at Salorino, to push on for Port-

alegre, in spite of wind or rain ; but what, then, was he to do with Donna Isidora ? In such a November deluge she could neither travel on horse or foot, and "leathern conveyances" were not to be had in Spanish Estremadura in those days, nor in the present either, probably. To leave her alone in that deserted house was not to be thought of.

So Quentin stayed.

Time did not pass slowly, however. They did not read, you may be assured, though books were plentifully strewed about, as the French had been lighting their pipes with them ; but Isidora took to teaching Quentin the language of the fan, as spoken or used at the bull-fight, the theatre, on the Prado, or elsewhere, and with such a pair of eyes beaming on him, over, under, or through the sticks of the aforesaid fan, he proved an apt scholar. Who would have been otherwise ?

He taught her his name, at which she laughed very much, and thought it an odd one.

Ere the noon of the second day, they had made great progress in their friendship, and, circumstanced as they were, could they have failed to do so ? Isolated and without resource, save in each other's dangerous society, they could scarcely be ever separate in that huge deserted house, in which they were besieged by the weather.

That the impulsive Spanish girl had conceived a strong affection for Quentin was evident from her occasional silence, her palpitation, her chang-

ing look, and the half-suppressed fire of her dark eyes, when he approached or spoke to her ; then it would seem, that as he grew bewildered and timid, she became bold and unconstrained.

It would be difficult to trace the workings and describe the struggles of Donna Isidora's heart in the growing passion she felt for Quentin—the mere result of accidents which she could not control, and a propinquity which she could not avoid ; or how rapidly the brief self-delusion of sisterhood and platonic affection melted away before the warm and impulsive nature of her character ; how reason weakened as passion grew strong, and how she resolved to bend him to her will, for in mind and *race*, rather more than years, she was much his senior.

She knew that Spain was almost lawless now ; that ties were broken, the bonds of society loosed, and that civil order, such as it was, had disappeared amid the anarchy consequent to the French invasion : hence a hundred wild schemes coursed through her busy brain. She even hoped to lure him into the guerilla ranks, or to fly with her to some remote part of the provinces, where they could never more be traced ; to the mountains of Estrella, the Sierra de Oca, or the dark and wooded ranges of the Sierra Morena, where, forgotten alike by friend and foe, they could live on unknown. Such were her vague ideas for the future. For the present, it sufficed her that she

loved Quentin, and that he must be taught to love her in return.

On the other hand, it is difficult to define exactly the feeling which Quentin entertained for his young Spanish friend. Of her wonderful beauty he was by no means insensible. Was it platonic regard that *he* felt? We should not think so at his years, and more especially as we are disinclined to believe in such love at all. Then what the deuce was it? the reader may ask.

Flirtation, perhaps—"playing with fire," certainly.

Young though he was, Quentin could not forget Flora Warrender, and that sweet evening by the Kelpie's Pool, and the first thrill of boyish love, with all the anxious moments, the feverish hopes that stirred his heart—the tender memories of his grande passion, for such it was; and thus something of chivalry in his breast made him struggle against the present tempter and her piquante charms, for Flora's gentle image always seemed to rise up between him and her; and yet—and yet—there was something very bewildering in the hourly companionship, the complete isolation and reliance of this lovely young girl with whom he was now wandering in solitude—a companionship known to themselves alone. It was delightful but perilous work, and Quentin could not analyse, even if he cared to do so, the emotions she was exciting in his breast.

Where, when, and how was it all to end? He feared that he felt too little anxiety for reaching Portalegre and delivering the reply to Sir John Hope's despatch; and yet, if the storm abated, why tarry?

Quentin was soon assured that Isidora loved him; and as he was not without that most useful bump on his occiput denominated self-esteem, he felt flattered accordingly; yet, withal, he struggled manfully against the passion, with which this dangerous knowledge and Isidora's attractions, were both calculated to inspire him.

He was anxious to appear to advantage in her eyes. Why? She was nothing to him, yet, for some time, she had been the object of all his solicitude. In the course of conversation, she admitted that she had many admirers, which, for a girl so attractive, was likely enough. But why permit the development of a passion in her that could lead to nothing good? Why respond to her growing tenderness? Why—ay, there was the rub, the lure, and the peril.

His affections, such as a lad not yet twenty may possess, were promised elsewhere. Was Flora true, and remembering him still? This was rub number two.

Quentin Kennedy, I tremble for thee; and, if the truth must be told, much more for the future peace and reputation of Donna Isidora de Saldos, for neither a wholesome terror of Baltasar's wrath

or the Padre Trevino's knife may avail her much.

"What if she loves me—loves me as dear Flora did?" thought Quentin; and when this pleasing but alarming idea occurred to him, he really dreaded that her heart might be too far involved in those tender passages, coquetries, and other little matters incident to their hourly intercourse: white hands taken almost inadvertently or as a matter of course; a soft cheek, at times so near his own; and darkly-lashed eyes that looked softly into his, were rather alluring, certainly.

In Spain, women do not shake hands with men; their dainty fingers (dingy frequently) are kissed, or not touched at all; hence we may suppose that Quentin and Isidora, when they began to sit hand-in-hand looking out on the pouring rain as twilight deepened, had got a long way on in lovemaking—in engineering parlance, that he had pushed the trenches to the base of the glacis.

Some one remarks somewhere, that the fogs and sleet of England mar many a ripening love; but that under the clear skies, in the balmy air, in the long sultry days, the voluptuous evenings, and still more in the gorgeous moonlights of Spain, the gentle passion is of more rapid growth, and becomes more impulsive, heartfelt, and keen.

In the present instance, however, chance and a



storm—such as that which waylaid Dido and the Trojan hero—had been the inspirers of Donna Isidora, who, sooth to say, found Quentin somewhat slow to follow her example.

“Mi hermano—my brother—you will be and must be,” she would whisper at times, in a manner that, to say the least of it, was very bewitching.

“I shall try, Donna Isidora.”

“Try, say you? Wherefore only *try*?” she asked, with her eyes full of fire and inquiry. “Is it a task so difficult to feel esteem or love for me? Go! I shall hate you!” Then she would thrust aside his hand, and pouting, half turn away her flushing face, only that the little hand might be taken again, an explanation made, and reconciliation effected.

On the evening of the second day, after one of those little poutings, and after Isidora, in anger, had been absent from him nearly two hours, she rejoined Quentin in the boudoir, which was their usual apartment, and where he welcomed her reappearance so warmly, that her face was overspread by happy and beautiful smiles.

Poor Quentin, who was at that age when a young man is apt to slide rather than fall into a regular love fit, was gradually being ensnared.

“The companionship of these few days I shall remember for ever,” said he. “You shall indeed be sorrowed for, hermana mia.”

"Think only of the present, and not of parting," said she, letting her cheek sink upon his shoulder, as they sat, hand in hand, in the window of the little boudoir, the objects of which were half hidden in the twilight.

Quentin felt his heart beat quickly, and his respiration become thick, but he said with a tender smile—

"Isidora, I am almost afraid of you."

"Afraid—and of *me*?"

"Yes."

"But why, *mi querido*?"

"You carry a stiletto," said he, laughing, "and I don't like it."

"There—behold!" she exclaimed in a breathless voice, as she drew the long steel bodkin from her hair, which fell in a dark and ripply volume over her shoulders and bosom; "I am defenceless now," she added, throwing it on the sofa; but Quentin was slow to accept the challenge.

"Oh, Isidora, to what end is all this?" he asked, struggling with himself, and almost remonstrating with her. "Why allure me to love you, as love you I shall?"

As he said this, the dark and lustrous eyes of the Castilian girl filled with half-subdued fire; her lashes drooped, and she heaved a long sigh.

"You speak of love," she said, in a low voice, while her bosom swelled beneath its scarlet corset and the thin muslin habit-shirt that was gathered

round her slender throat ; “ all men are alike to a woman who is not in love ; but in my heart I feel an emotion which tells me that if I loved there would be to me but *one* only in the world—he, my lover !”

Her calm energy, and the deep sudden glance she shot at Quentin, quite bewildered the poor fellow.

“ Tell me,” she resumed, while his left hand was caressed in both of hers, and her right cheek yet rested on his shoulder, while the massive curls of her hair fell over him, “ is there not something delicious in the mystery and tremulousness of love ; to feel that we are no longer two, but one—*ONE* in heart and soul, in thought and sympathy ? Speak—you do not answer me—*estrella mia—mi vida—mi alma !*” (my star—my life—my soul) she added, in a low but piercing accent.

Trembling with deep emotion, Quentin pressed his lips to her burning brow, and there ensued a long pause, during which she lay with her forehead against his cheek.

“ Listen to me, Quentin,” said she, looking upward with swimming eyes ; “ I would speak with you seriously, earnestly, from my heart.”

“ *Niña de mi alma*—about what ?”

“ Religion, love.”

“ You choose an odd time for it—but wherefore ?”

“ I would teach you mine,” she whispered.

"Yours—and for what purpose?"

"That—that——"

"Nay, I have courage enough to hear anything, dearest; for what purpose, *mi querida*?"

"That endearing term decides me—that we may be married, Quentin."

"I—senora!"

"You and I—what is there wonderful in that?"

Had a shell exploded between them, poor Quentin could not have been more nonplussed than by this proposition.

"Flirtation is a very fine thing," says his Peninsular comrade, Charles O'Malley, "but it's only a state of transition, after all; the tadpole existence of the lover would be very great fun, if one was never to become a frog under the hands of the parson."

Some such reflection occurred to Quentin, who stammered—

"But, Isidora, people require money to marry."

"Of course—sometimes."

"Well, I am not the heir of a shilling in the world."

"Nor am I the heiress of a pistole."

"Well, dearest Isidora——"

"Who should marry if we don't, whose circumstances are equal, and whose position in the world is so exactly similar? Ah, that we had the Padre Florez here!"

Though this was said with the sweetest of

smiles, Quentin failed to see the force of her reasoning; but it was impossible to refrain from kissing the rounded cheek that lay so near his own.

Then an emotion of compunction stole into his heart, and rousing her from the delicious trance into which she seemed sinking, he withdrew a little (for he had never been made love to before, so surprise gave him courage), and then said—

“Isidora, this must not be—be calm and listen to me: I promised your brother—what was it that he said to me?—oh, Isidora, I must not love you; moreover, I am pledged to love a girl who is far, far away, and—but be calm, I beseech you, and think of the future!”

She now sprung from his side to snatch her stiletto from the sofa where it lay. Whether she meant to use it against herself, or him, or both, for a moment he could scarcely tell; her dark eyes were filled with a lurid gleam, and her cheek was now deadly pale; one little hand, white and tremulous, tore back her streaming and dishevelled hair; the other clutched the hilt of the weapon. She gave a keen glance at the blade, and then, as if to place the temptation to destroy beyond her reach, she snapped it to pieces and cast them from her.

Then snatching up a lamp which Quentin had lighted but a short time before, she rushed from

the room, leaving him alone, bewildered and in darkness.

Quentin hurried after, and called to her repeatedly; but there was no response. He heard a door closed with violence at a distance, and then all became still—terribly still, save the now familiar sound of the rain lashing the walls and windows of the villa in the darkness without, and the howling of the wind, as it tore through the bleak October woods.

Nearly an hour elapsed after this, and knowing her wild and impulsive nature, his excitement and alarm for her safety became all but insupportable.

“Oh heavens, if she should have destroyed herself! Her death will be laid to my charge.”

There seemed to be no length her fiery rashness was not capable of leading her, and not unnaturally Congreve's well-known couplet occurred to his memory:—

“Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turn'd,  
Nor hell a fury like a woman scorn'd!”



## CHAPTER II.

## THE POISONED WINE.

“ Whatever can untune th’ harmonious soul,  
And its mild reasoning faculties control ;  
Give false ideas, raise desires profane,  
And whirl in eddies the tumultuous brain ;  
Mixed with curs’d art, she direfully around,  
Through all *his* nerves diffused the sad compound.”

OVID.

WHEN Donna Isidora rushed from Quentin, she took her way unerringly (as she knew the villa well) up several flights of stairs, through passages and suites of apartments, where he could not have followed her without a guide, until she reached a little room, which had been the library and confessional of the family chaplain.

Remote from the rest of the house, its shelves full of books, its table and desk littered with letters and papers, with little religious pictures on the walls, a Madonna crowned by a white chapel on a bracket, a vase of withered lilies, and other little matters indicative of taste, were all untouched as when the poor Padre Florez had last been there. In rambling over the villa, if Ribeau-pierre’s dragoons had been in the chamber, they

found nothing in it which they deemed valuable enough to destroy or carry off.

Here it was that Donna Isidora had been, when, in a fit of petulance, she had before absented herself from Quentin. She set down the lamp, and taking up a book which she had been previously perusing, and which she had found lying upon the desk where the padre had left it open, for its pages were covered with dust, she muttered—

“Let me read it again, and let me be assured; but oh, if I should destroy him or myself! What matter, then? Better both die than that *she* should have him, whoever she is—wherever she is! Oh, Padre Florez—Padre Florez, if this anecdote you have left in my way should be but a snare to death!”

Then she ground her little pearly teeth as she spoke, and turned with trembling hands the dust-covered page which the chaplain's hand had indicated for some scientific purpose with certain marks in pencil, ere he had cast the volume on his desk, doubtless when scared from the villa by the irruption of Ribeaupierre's dragoons.

It was a quarto volume on poisons, printed at Madrid, and the paragraph which interested Isidora ran as follows.

“Note of a medicated wine, which produceth various emotions and quaint fancies, but chiefly love and madness for a time in those who partake thereof.

“Celius, an ancient Latin writer, telleth us of a company of young men, who were drinking in a taberna of the luxurious city of Agrigentum in Sicily, in those days when the tyrant Phalaris usurped the sovereignty thereof, and who, on a sudden, were seized by a malady of the brain. Being in sight of the sea, they believed themselves to be on board of a ship which was about to be cast away in a storm, and while clamouring and shouting wildly, to save themselves, they flung out of the windows the whole of the furniture; and in this belief they continued for some hours, even after being brought before a magistrate, whom they mistook for a pilot, and besought in moving terms to steer the galley aright, lest she should founder.

“On others, this wine acted as a philtre, and on seeing women, they fell madly in love with them, threatening their own destruction if their love were not responded to.

“I was persuaded in my own mind, says Celius, that this singular malady could only arise from some adulteration of the wine, and therefore had the landlord summoned before a magistrate, who compelled him to confess that he was in the habit of adulterating wines with a mixture of henbane and mandrakes (the root of which is said to bear a resemblance to the human form), and which must thus doubtless be considered the cause of this singular disease.”

“Mandrake and henbane—a little of this mixture, and Quentin might love me! There is no sea here, and he could never fancy the villa to be a ship,” thought Isidora, weeping tears of bitterness and wounded pride. “If I can only bring this delirium on him, the real truth of his heart may come out, and I shall learn whether he loves me or loves me *not*, and who this other is that he prefers to me. But if in his madness—pho! I can defend myself. Oh, Padre Florez, was it a good or bad angel that tempted you to leave this open book in my way, and lured me to read it?”

A strange and deep dark smile came over the lovely face of this wild and wilful girl as she took up the lamp and approached the cabinet of the worthy Padre Florez, whose room seemed quite as much a laboratory as a library, for goodly rows of phials and bottles contested for place with the Bollandists, *Acta Sanctorum*, the Acts of the Council of Trent, the Annals of Ferrereas, &c., for doubtless he had been the doctor—a curer of bodies as well as of souls—in his comarca, or district of Estremadura.

Hastily and impatiently she passed her lamp along the rows of little drawers containing herbs and simples, and the shelves of phials, the labels of which were quite enigmas to her; but on the third occasion a cry of joy escaped her.

“Las Mandragoras—el Beleño!” she ex-

claimed, as she snatched two small bottles, each full of a clear liquid, which bore those names. But now a terrible yet natural doubt seized her.

“How much of these may I pour in this wine without destroying us *both*?—what matter how much—what matter how much, so far as I am concerned? My life is neither a valuable nor a happy one; but he—have I a right to destroy him, perhaps body and soul—ah, Madre divina, body and soul, too! No matter—I must learn the truth, and whether he loves or only fears me.”

In fact, the sudden passion which she had conceived for Quentin seemed to have disordered her brain.

She heard him calling her at that moment, and as there was no time to lose in further consideration, she filled a small phial from both bottles, thrust it in her bosom, and left the room, previously, by what impulse we know not, concealing the book of the padre, who could little have foreseen the dangerous use to which its open pages would be put.

With a heart that palpitated painfully between hope and fear, love and anger, Isidora quitted the room of the padre to return to Quentin.

He, in the meantime, had become greatly alarmed by her protracted absence, and procuring a light by flashing powder in the pan of one of his pistols, he was proceeding in search of her



through the chambers of the villa, from the walls of which many a grim old fellow in beard and breast-plate looked grimly and sternly at him out of his frame:—many a grave hidalgo by Diego Velasquez were there, and many a scriptural Murillo, sold, perhaps, by that great painter for bread in the streets of his native Seville.

Of all the chateaux en Espagne, this Villa de Maciera, with its episodes, was, perhaps, the last of which Quentin could have imagined himself to be even temporarily master. Gloomy, empty, and deserted, it seemed to be veritably one of the mysterious mansions of which he had read so much in the romances of Mrs. Anne Radcliffe, who was then in the zenith of her fame.

“It is, indeed, a devil of a predicament,” he muttered.

Again and again he called her name aloud, without hearing other response than the echoes. The place was mournfully still, and now the wind and rain had ceased, and the night had become calm. Well, there was some comfort in that; with morning he might resume his journey; but this Spanish girl—his heart trembled for her, for there seemed to be no extravagant impulse to which she was not capable of giving way.

To have responded to her wayward love, and then to have “levanted” on the first convenient opportunity, “a way we (sometimes) have in the army,” might have been the treacherous measure



adopted by many; but Quentin, apart from his admiration of her beauty, had a sincere regard for the girl, and though young in years, felt older by experience than those years warranted.

He thought she might have retired to her room—to rest, perhaps; yet he could not hear her breathing, for when he listened at the door, all was still within.

He knocked gently, but there was no response, so pushing it open, he entered. Isidora had told him that this was the apartment she usually occupied when residing with the Condesa de Maciera.

It was the perfection of a little bed-chamber; elaborate candelabra of cut crystal glittered like prisms on the white marble mantelpiece, the central ornament of which was an exquisite crucifix of ivory. The floor was of polished oak, and the walls were hung with some charming water-colour landscapes of the adjacent mountain scenery, in chaste and narrow frames; and then the little bed, half buried amid muslin curtains of the purest white, was much more like an English than a Spanish one.

Tent-form, the flowing drapery depended from a gilt coronet; the pillows, edged with the finest lace, were all untouched and unpressed, so Donna Isidora was not there.

Quentin started as he saw her figure suddenly reflected in a large cheval-glass. She was standing behind him, near the door of the apartment, re-

garding him with an expression of mournful interest in her eyes; her face pale as death, her hair flowing and dishevelled over her shoulders, her hands pressed upon her bosom, and seeming wondrously white when contrasted with the deep scarlet velvet of her corset; her flounces of black and scarlet, and the taper legs ending in the pretty Cordovan shoes, making altogether a very charming portrait.

"Senor," she said, in a low voice, "what were you seeking here?"

"I sought you, Isidora; I became seriously alarmed——"

"You do, then, care for me, senor—a little?"

"Care for you, dearest Isidora——"

"Yet you drove me away from you!" she said, in a voice full of tender reproach.

"Do not say so," replied Quentin, taking her hot and trembling hands in his, and feeling very bewildered indeed.

"Your studied coldness repelled me. Ah, Dios mio! how calm, how collected you are, and I—! get me some water, friend—or some wine, rather; and this other—this other—she——"

"Who, senora?"

"Some wine, my friend. I am cold and flushed by turns. Some wine, I implore you!"

"Permit me to lead you from this," said Quentin, conducting her back to the boudoir, where he seated her on the sofa by his side, and

endeavoured to soothe her ; but the memory of the late scene, and the fire of jealousy that glowed in her heart, filled it with mingled anger and love.

While Quentin, all unconscious of what was about to ensue, was untwisting the wire of a champagne flask, she—while the light seemed to flash from her eyes, and her cheek flushed deeply—emptied the entire contents of her secret phial into a crystal goblet, and when the sparkling wine, with its pink tint and myriad globules, frothed and effervesced, as Quentin poured it in, the poison—for such it was—became at once concealed.

“Drink with me,” said she, kissing the cup and presenting it to him ; then, feverish and excited as he was, he took a deep draught ; after which, with another of her strange smiles, the donna drank the rest, and, as she did so, the pallor of her little face, and the unnatural light in her eyes, attracted the attention of Quentin.

He took her hands in his, and began to speak, saying he knew not what, for he seemed to have lost all control over his tongue ; then the room appeared to swim round him, while objects became wavering and indistinct.

“What—what is this that is coming over me ?” he exclaimed.

“Death, perhaps,” said Isidora, laying her head on his shoulder, and pressing his hand to

her lips ; “ but, *mi vida—mi querido*—you will not go from me to her ?”

“ To whom ?”

“ She—that other whom you love ?”

“ Flora—Flora Warrender !” exclaimed Quentin, wildly, as the potent wine and its dangerous adjuncts began to affect his brain.

Whether the padre’s *beleno* was the exact compound referred to by his ancient authority, we are not prepared to say, but the effect of the cup imbibed by Quentin was sufficiently disastrous.

The objects in the room began to multiply with wonderful rapidity ; the white silk drapery of the walls seemed to be covered with falling stars ; the pale blue damask curtains of the windows assumed strange shapes, and appeared to wave to and fro. The bronze statuettes on the mantelpiece, the tables and buffets, appeared to be performing *fandangos* and other fantastic dances, and, as the delirium crept over him, Quentin grasped at the back of a sofa to save himself from falling, while Isidora still clasped him in her arms ; and now he believed her to be Flora Warrender, and as such addressed, and even caressed her.

Another draught of pure champagne, which he took greedily to quench the burning thirst that now seized him, completed the temporary overthrow of his reason.

Isidora seemed to pass away, and Flora Warrender took her place. He wept as he kissed

her hands, and spoke with sorrow of their long, long separation; of the dangers and privations he had undergone, and of Cosmo's tyranny; of the joy with which he beheld her again, and now, that they never more would part; and thus, with every endearing word, he unconsciously stabbed his rash and impetuous Spaniard, who, although he spoke in English, and she was half delirious with the wine, knew too well that when Quentin kissed her thick, dark wavy hair that curled over her broad low forehead, and pressed her hand to his heart, he was thinking of *another*, for whom these endearments were intended.

At last, stupefaction came over him, and sinking on a fauteuil, he remembered no more.

## CHAPTER III.

PADRE FLOREZ.

“Not yet—I never knew till now  
How precious life could be;  
My heart is full of love—O Death,  
I cannot come with thee!  
Not yet—the flowers are in my path,  
The sun is in the sky;  
Not yet, my heart is full of hope—  
I cannot bear to die.”—L. E. L.

ON recovering from the insensibility that had come upon him, Quentin had no idea of what period of time had elapsed since the occurrence of the episode we have just described. In fact, he had considerable difficulty in remembering where he was, so maddened was he by a burning heat, by pricking pains through all his system, an intolerable thirst, an aching head, and a throat and tongue that were rough and dry. His temples throbbed fearfully, his pulse was quick; there was a clamorous anxiety in his mind he knew not why or wherefore; he had a recurrent hiccough; and, though he knew it not, these were all the symptoms of being dangerously poisoned.

The morning was bright and sunny. Refreshed



by the past rains, the rows of orange-trees around the stately terrace, the lawn of the villa, the acacias that covered its walls, and the clumps of arbutus and beech about it, looked fresh and green.

Producing a grateful sensation, the cool morning breeze fanned his throbbing temples, and on rousing himself, Quentin found that he was lying on the marble terrace near the bronze fountain, of the cool and sparkling water of which he drank deeply, as he had frequently done before, while almost unconscious, by mere instinct, for now he had no memory of it.

Weak, faint, and giddy, and feeling seriously ill, he staggered up and laved his hands and brow in the marble basin; then he endeavoured to reflect or consider how his present predicament came about. Donna Isidora, where was she? and where was Flora Warrender? for he had misty memories of the endearments of *both*.

It seemed that overnight he had a strange dream that the former—or could it be the latter?—had been carried off by French soldiers, and that he had neither the power to succour or to save her.

This, however, was no dream, but a reality, for a patrol of French cavalry, seeing lights in the villa, which they believed to be deserted, had ridden upon the terrace and proceeded to search the place. A few dismounted, and, armed with their swords and pistols, entered the house. Amid her terror on witnessing the unexpected



stupefaction that had come over Quentin, the donna heard the clank of hoofs on the terrace, and then the jingle of spurs and steel scabbards on the tessellated floor of the vestibule.

Alarm lest her brother had come in search of her, and had tracked them hither, was her first emotion. Covering the insensible form of Quentin with the blue damask drapery of a window, near which he had sunk to sleep upon a fauteuil, she stooped and kissed his flushed forehead; then taking a lamp, she endeavoured to make her way to the room of the Padre Florez, which she considered alike remote and secure; but her light was seen flashing from story to story up the great marble staircase.

"En avant, mes braves," cried an officer, laughing; "'tis only a petticoat—follow, and capture."

The dismounted Chasseurs uttered a shout, and giving chase, soon secured the unfortunate Isidora.

Shrieking, she was borne into the open air; her resistance, which was desperate, only serving to provoke much coarse laughter and joking. A few minutes after this, she found herself trussed like a bundle of hay to the crupper of a troop-horse, and en route for Valencia de Alcantara, the captive of a smart young officer of Chasseurs à cheval, who further secured her close to his own person by a waist-belt. By alternate caresses and jests, he

endeavoured to soothe her fears, her grief, and her passion ; but seeing that the girl was beautiful, he was determined not to release her, for he was no other than our former jovial acquaintance, Eugene de Ribeaupierre, the sous-lieutenant of the 24th Chasseurs.

Partially roused by the noise and by her cries, Quentin had staggered to the terrace like one in a dream, and had fallen beside the fountain, so that his misty memories of having seen her carried off by French Chasseurs was no vision, but reality. Yet, somehow, he thought she might be in the villa after all, and he called her by name repeatedly.

And then there were memories of Flora Warrender that floated strangely through his brain. It seemed that he had but recently seen her, spoken with her, heard her voice, had embraced and clasped her to his breast—that Flora, whom he thought was far, far away—the Flora for whom he sorrowed and longed through the dreary hours of many a march by night and day, whom he had dreamed of and prayed for.

What mystery—what madness was this ?

The musical jangling of mule-bells was now heard, and ere long other actors came upon the scene, as some jovial muleteers, cracking their whips and their jokes, ascended the steps of the terrace, accompanied by a tall, thin, and reverend-looking padre, wearing a huge shovel hat and

a long black serge soutan, the buttons of which, a close row, extended from his chin to his ankles.

The old Condesa de Maciera, who, after being again and again terrified and harassed by the outrages of the plundering French patrols and foraging parties, had at last fled with all her household to the small Portuguese town of Marvao, had now sent her chaplain, the Padre Florez, back to see what was the state of matters at her villa, and he arrived thus most opportunely for Quentin Kennedy, whose uniform at once secured him the interest both of the padre and the muleteers.

The latter proved luckily to be Ramon Campillo, of Miranda del Ebro, his confrère Ignacio Noain, and others, whom Quentin had met before, and who at once recognised him and overwhelmed him with questions, to which he found the utter impossibility of giving satisfactory replies.

His present state was as puzzling to himself as to the padre, who had him conveyed within doors, and, strangely enough, into the boudoir, the features of which brought back to Quentin's memory some of the exciting and bewildering passages of last night. The unextinguished lamp yet smoked on the table, broken crystal cups and champagne flasks, chairs overturned, and a phial of very suspicious aspect, all attracted the attention of Padre Florez. As he examined the latter, and applied his nose and lips to the mouth, while endeavouring to discover what the contents

had been, he changed colour, and became visibly excited.

“Look to the stranger—what a mere boy he is!—but look to him, Ramon, mi hijo,” said he, “while I go to my room—my laboratory—and see what I can do for him.”

The padre, who had a deep and friendly interest in the household of his patrona the countess-dowager, and of the young Conde now serving with the guerilla band of Baltasar de Saldos, looked anxiously through the suites of rooms as he proceeded, sighing over the slashed Murillos and smashed mirrors, and the too evident sabrecuts in the richly-carved cabinets of oak and ebony, in the gilded consoles, the beautiful tables of marqueterie; and he groaned at last over the ruins of some alabaster statuettes and great jars of Sèvres and majolica, which, in the last night's search, the French had wantonly dashed to pieces.

Ere long, he reached his own room, and on looking about, he missed at once his quarto volume on poisons, the work he had been studying—particularly that fatal passage from Celius—when the French dragoons drove the whole household from the villa. It was gone; but in its place on the desk he found the two bottles left by Isidora, the decoctions of mandrake and henbane. Here was a clue to the illness of the Ingles below; but how had the matter come to pass? Had he poisoned himself? This the padre

doubted ; but as an instant remedy was necessary, an inquiry and explanation would follow the cure.

Selecting certain simples, the Padre Florez hurried back to his patient, who was stretched on the sofa of the boudoir in a very bewildered condition, endeavouring to understand and reply to the somewhat earnest and impetuous inquiries of Ramon and his brother muleteers, who were now en route from Marvao to Portalegre—news which could not fail to interest Quentin ; but he replied only by a languid and haggard smile.

He told them, however, that the sister of Don Baltasar de Saldos was in the villa, and implored them to search for her, which they did, in considerable excitement and surprise, leaving, as Ramon said, not even a rat-hole unexamined, but no trace of her could be found. Then Quentin rather surprised them by saying, impetuously, that she had been carried off by the French.

“Is it a dream, is she dead, or has she fled?” he asked of himself again and again ; “no, no ; she would never leave me willingly, her insane love forbids the idea.”

Ramon, in searching for the sister of the formidable guerilla chief, whose name was already finding an echo in every Castilian heart, found Quentin's cap, sabre, and pistols, and fortunately the despatch or reply of Don Baltasar to Sir John Hope. Ignacio Noain found a lady's shoe



of Cordovan leather, which the padre identified as having belonged to Donna Isidora. This served to corroborate the strange story of Quentin ; but Florez remembered that the donna was in the habit of visiting the countess at the villa, and this little slipper might have been left behind by her on some occasion. It was found, however, in the vestibule, where it had fallen from her foot as the dragoons somewhat roughly dragged her away.

“ In what way came this young stranger to speak of De Saldos’ sister at all ? Had they eloped together ? If so,” thought the padre, “ then Heaven help the Englishman, for his doom is sealed !”

“ I am ill—ill, padre—ill in body and sick at heart !” said Quentin faintly, as Florez, watch in hand, felt his pulse.

“ You appear to have been poisoned, my poor boy,” said he.

“ Poisoned ?” repeated Quentin, as a terrible fear and suspicion of Isidora’s revengeful pride rushed upon him.

“ Yes—beyond a doubt.”

“ Shall I die, padre ?” he asked in an agitated voice.

“ Oh no, my son, there is no fear of that—I shall cure you by a few simple remedies.”

Quentin felt greatly relieved in mind on hearing this ; but at present thirst was his chief ail-



ment, with an internal heat and pain that gave him no rest.

“Of what were you partaking last night?”

“Of wine only—champagne, which I found in a cabinet of the comedero” (dining-room).

“There is but one crystal cup remaining here unbroken.”

“From that I drank it,” said Quentin, who, in his delirium, had smashed a supper equipage of his own collecting.

It was a large goblet of Venetian crystal, studded with brilliantly-coloured stones. The Padre Florez looked at the dregs and shook his white head.

“This wine has been drugged—there is a fresh mystery here! And Donna Isidora de Saldos was with you last night—you are assured of that?”

“As sure as that I live and breathe, Senor Padre.”

“Alone?” continued the priest, with knitted brows.

“Alone.”

“How came it to pass that her brother entrusted her with you?” asked the padre, suspiciously.

Quentin was too ill to explain that she had been sent with him in disguise, as the mother of the guerilla Trevino; and Padre Florez, who naturally conceived the idea that they had eloped as lovers, and had quarrelled, to prevent a great tragedy, set about curing him.

He compelled him to drink quantities of new milk and salad oil, both of which he procured from the muleteers who were bivouacking on the terrace ; after this, he gave him warm water mixed with the same oil, and fresh butter, to provoke intense sickness, to destroy the acrimony of the poison, and to prevent it doing injury to the bowels.

“ If the pain continues, Ramon, we shall have to kill a sheep,” said the padre, “ and apply its intestines, reeking hot, to the stomach of the patient ; ’tis a remedy I have never known to fail in allaying spasms there, especially if the sheep be a *moreno*. ”

By nightfall, however, thanks to the good padre’s real skill, which was superior to his superstition in the efficacy of black-faced mutton, Quentin was quite relieved, and after a time related his whole story from the time of his leaving Herrerucla. Florez listened to him with considerable interest, approved of all he had done, and gave him much good advice ; but added that he feared De Saldos would hold him accountable for the loss of his sister, for whose treatment, and of whose ultimate fate among the French, he had the greatest apprehension. He added that his visit to the villa seemed to have been a special interposition of heaven in Quentin’s favour, as he would inevitably have died in mortal agonies but for the prompt and simple applications which saved him.

He desired Ramon to take special charge of the patient to Portalegre ; to see that by the way he got nothing stronger for food than milk, gruel, or barley broth, and no wine whatever ; and then giving them all his benediction, which the muleteers received on their knees with uncovered heads, he stuck his shovel hat on his worthy old cranium, the thin hairs of which were white as snow, mounted his sleek mule, and pricking its dapple flanks with his box stirrup-irons, departed for Marvao, by the way of Valencia de Alcantara, where he hoped to trace, and perhaps release the unfortunate girl from her captors.

Impatient though the muleteers were to proceed with their train of mules, which were laden chiefly with wine for Sir John Hope's division, they agreed to remain for a night at the villa, where their cattle grazed on the lawn.

With dawn next day they set forth, with Quentin riding at the head of the train, mounted on Madrina, and feeling very much like one in a dream.

"Come, Ignacio Noain, a stirrup-cup ere we go," said Ramon, as he came forth, cracking his enormous whip, a blunderbuss slung on his back, and his sombrero rakishly cocked over his left eye.

Ignacio handed a cupful of wine to his leader.

"Demonio !" said the latter, "this smacks of the borrachio skin."

"To me it was luscious as a melon of Abrantes

in June, after the coarse aguardiente we drank last night," said Ignacio, who looked rather bloodshot about the eyes.

"Of course you haven't tried the casks of Valdepenas on the three leading mules?" said Ramon, with a cunning leer.

"They are for the English general and his staff, so every cask is guarded by an outer one."

"And thus your gimlet failed to reach the wine?"

"Precisely so."

"Maldita! the merchant who sold that wine must either be a rogue at heart, or an old muleteer, to be so well up to all the tricks of the road. And now, senor, here is milk for you; no wine; we must remember the orders of Padre Florez," said Ramon, presenting Quentin with a bowl of new goat's-milk, as he sat, pale as a spectre, on the demipique saddle with which Madrina was accoutred, and which, in addition to all her other fringe and worsted trappings, gave that stately pet-mare very much the aspect of a mummer's nag.

Quentin, though refreshed and revived by the cool and delicious morning air, and cheered by the hope of being soon at head-quarters with his present jovial guides, felt sad and bewildered when he thought of Isidora, her beauty, her impetuous spirit, the wild and sudden love she had professed for himself, and the too probable horror of her fate in the hands of the French, who were

so unscrupulous towards the Spaniards and Portuguese.

Then the mystery of the poison ; it was no doubt, he hoped, some fatal mistake, but one which might never be solved or explained.

In fancy he seemed still to see her wondrous dark eyes, with their thick black upper and lower lashes, while her soft musical voice seemed to mingle with the melodious bells of the long train of mules at the head of which Madrina paced as guide ; and as they descended the vine-clad hills towards the frontiers of Portugal, he turned in his saddle to give a farewell glance at the deserted Villa de Maciera.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE ARMY MARCHES.

“No martial shout is there—in silence dread,  
Save the dull cadence of the soldier’s tread,  
Or where the measured beat of distant drum  
Tells forth their slow advance—they come! they come!  
On! England, on! and thou, O Scotland, raise,  
’Midst Lusias’ wilds, thy shout of other days,  
Till grim Alcoba catch thy slogan roar,  
And trembling, glisten to thy blue claymore.”

LORD GRENVILLE.—1813.

ON the 2nd day of November, 1808, the division of Sir John Hope broke up from its cantonments at Portalegre, and by successive regiments began its march towards Spain.

The whole British army in Portugal was now pouring forward, and it was calculated that when Sir John Moore effected a junction with the Spanish armies, the united forces would amount to one hundred and thirteen thousand men, to oppose the vast power of France, which was divided into eight corps, led by the first soldiers of the Empire, the Marshal-Dukes of Belluno, Istria, Cornegliano, Treviso, Elchingen, Abrantes, Generals St. Cyr and Lefebre.



To prevent this junction was the first measure of the French, twenty-five thousand of whom attacked the main body of Blake's army on the 31st of October, and, after an obstinate conflict of eight hours, forced him back upon Valmeseda. He was without artillery, otherwise this famous Irish soldier of fortune might have held the ground against them, even though outnumbered as he was by eight thousand bayonets.

Meanwhile, Napoleon in person advanced to Burgos, where he established his head-quarters, and from whence he issued an edict in the name of his brother Joseph, as King of Spain, granting a pardon to all Spaniards, soldiers, guerillas, and others, who, within one month after his arrival at Madrid, would lay down their arms and renounce all connexion with Great Britain. Soon after Madrid fell into his hands, either by a memory of the terrors of Zaragossa or the treachery of Morla, though sixty thousand Spaniards were ready to defend its streets and gates!

Sir John Moore was a young Scotch officer of great experience. He had served at the capture of Corsica, and led the stormers of the Mozzello Fort amid a shower of shot, shell, and hand-grenades. He was present at the capture of many of the West India islands; he had served in the Irish Rebellion, the disastrous expedition to Holland, and the glorious one to Egypt, which wrested that country from the French; and he had been

commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean and Sweden. Though superseded temporarily by the vacillating ministry who sent Sir Harry Burrard to Portugal, he was still modestly content to act as third in command, nobly saying, that "he would never refuse to serve his country while he was able, and that if the King commanded him to act as ensign, he would obey him."

It was this chivalrous spirit which, on arriving in Portugal after the battle of Vimiera, made him declare to Sir Hew Dalrymple, that as Sir Arthur Wellesley had done so much in winning that victory and the battle of Roleia, it was but fair that *he* should still continue to take the lead in the task of freeing Portugal from the French; and Moore offered generously, "if the good of the service required it, to execute any part of the campaign allotted to him, without interfering with Sir Arthur."

After he obtained the command, the utmost activity prevailed at head-quarters to forward the expedition for the relief of the Spanish Peninsula, though he was left by Government almost without money. "He was very desirous," says Napier, "that troops who had a journey of six hundred miles to make, previous to meeting the enemy, should not, at the commencement, be overwhelmed by the torrents of rain, which in Portugal descend at this period with such violence as to destroy the shoes, ammunition, and accoutrements of

the soldier, and render him almost unfit for service."

In eight days he had his troops ready, and most of them in motion; but difficulties soon occurred. The lazy Portuguese asserted that it was impracticable to carry siege, or even field artillery, by the mule and horse paths which traversed their vast mountain sierras; but Sir John Moore discovered on his march that the roads, though very bad, were open enough for the purpose; but the knowledge came rather too late.

The artillery, consisting of twenty-four pieces, with a thousand cavalry, he sent with the division of Sir John Hope, whose orders were to march by Elvas on the Madrid road. Moore retained one brigade of six-pounders at head-quarters.

Two brigades of infantry, under General Paget, were to march by Elvas and Alcantara. Two others, under Marshal Beresford, by the way of Coimbra, and three more, under General Fraser, were to move by the city of Abrantes, near the right bank of the Tagus.

The *whole* to unite at Salamanca, the general rendezvous, where Sir John Hope and Sir David Baird, with their divisions, were to join, if they failed to do so at Valladolid.

Such was the scheme of Sir John Moore for commencing operations against the Emperor of France at the head of his mighty legions.

Before the troops marched, he warned them in

general orders, that the Spaniards were a nation by habit and nature grave, austere, orderly, and sober, but prone to ire and easily insulted; he therefore sought to impress upon his soldiers the propriety of accommodating themselves to the manners of those they were going among, and neither by intemperance of conduct or language, to shock a people who were grateful to Britain for an alliance which was to free them from the bondage of France, and to restore them to their ancient liberty and independence.

“Upon entering Spain,” concludes this most judicious order, “as a compliment to the nation, the army will wear the *Red cockade*, in addition to their own. For this purpose, cockades are ordered for the non-commissioned officers and men; they will be sent from Madrid; but in the meantime officers are requested to provide them and put them on, as soon as they pass the frontier.”

Such expedition did the gallant Moore make, that he out-marched his magazines; and to use his own words, “the army ran the risk of finding itself in front of the enemy, with no more ammunition than the men carried in their pouches.”

And now, to resume our humble story, it was on the 2nd of November, the very day on which the second division was to march, that the Muleteer Ramon of Miranda and his train entered Portalegre about daybreak, with Quentin Kennedy

riding on Madrina, looking pale, weary, and exhausted.

“Por Dios ! we have just come in time, senor,” said Ramon ; “another hour, and even the rear guard would have been difficult to overtake. Here I shall leave you and my casks of Valdepenas, and then, ho for Lisbon !”

The sun had not yet risen, and the dull November haze that rolled from the valleys along the sombre slopes of the rocky sierras, yet hovered over the quaint little episcopal city of Portalegre. The church bells and those of the Santa Engracia convent (at which Quentin was to have left poor Isidora) were ringing out a farewell peal to the departing British, and prayers for the success of their arms were mingled with the morning matins at every altar in the bishopric. The narrow streets were blocked up with sombre crowds of people, and by troops in heavy marching order. All betokened hasty preparations for advancing to the front, and amid the loud vivas of the Portuguese could be heard the wailing of the poor soldiers' wives who were to be left behind for on the 10th October, Sir John Moore, who, though brave as a lion, was tender as a woman, and whose love and devotion for his mother was a leading characteristic throughout his short but brilliant life, issued the following order :—

“As in the course of the long march which the army is about to undertake, and where *no carts*



will be allowed, the women would unavoidably be exposed to the greatest hardship and distress, commanding officers are, therefore, desired to use their endeavours to prevent as many as possible, *particularly those having young children*, or such as are not stout or equal to fatigue, from following the army. An officer will be charged to draw their rations, and they will be sent back to England by the first good opportunity; and, when landed, they will receive the same allowance which they would have been entitled to if they had not embarked, to enable them to reach their homes."

Unfortunately, implicit obedience was not paid to this humane order, and thus many women, with their children, followed the troops in secret, and thus many, if not all, perished by the way, during the horrors of the retreat to Corunna.

Among these, inspired by love and trust, who courageously followed the army on foot and in secrecy, or sometimes mounted on a poor lean burro, which they grazed by the wayside, was the wife of Allan Grange, the poor sergeant, reduced at Colchester barracks, a fragile and ailing creature, who bore a pale, sickly, and consumptive little baby at her breast.

The advanced guard of Light Dragoons, with oats and forage trussed in nets and bags upon the cruppers, had already been detailed, and were in their saddles, half a mile in front of the city, at the base of the hill on which it stands.



The twenty-four pieces of artillery were all in readiness, the trails limbered up and the horses traced, with water-buckets, spare wheels and forge-waggon, the gunners in their seats and saddles.

The massed columns of infantry were in heavy marching order, with great-coats rolled, canteens and havresacks slung crosswise, with colours, in some instances cased, and locks hammerstalled; the cavalry were in the great plaza, in close column of troops, every man riding with a net of forage (chopped straw or whins) behind him; the baggage-animals—horses, mules, and burros—already laden with tents, bags, beds, boxes, and camp-kettles, amid the cracking of whips, and oaths uttered in English, Irish, Spanish, and Portuguese, were driven forth to make way for the troops, who, while staff and other officers galloped about as if possessed by so many devils, began their march for Spain.

Bewildered by the confusion and hurly-burly of the scene amid which he so suddenly found himself, and thrust by the pressure of the crowd against the wall of the Santa Engracia convent, Quentin sat in the saddle of Madrina and saw nearly the whole division of Sir John Hope defile before him, a long and glittering array, for as the golden light of the sun poured along the picturesque vista of the ancient street, and the white rolling mists were dispelled or exhaled upward, the burnished barrels, bayonets, and sword-blades,

the polished brasses of the accoutrements, and the glazed tops of the shakos, all flashed and shone, while the thoroughfares resounded to the tramp of horse and foot, spurs, scabbards, and chain bridles—to the sharp blare of the cavalry trumpets, the drums of the infantry, and the hoarse war pipes of the plaided Highlanders—the wild, strange music that Scotsmen only *feel* or understand.

Many of the soldiers were pale and wan, from the comfortless wards of Belem hospital, and many a bandaged head many an arm in a scarf, and plaster on a cheek, showed the part they had borne at Roleia and Vimiera, and in the struggle which had just freed Portugal from those who aimed at the conquest of Europe.

Uniforms already old and thriftily patched with cloth of divers colours, housings faded, chabraques worn bare, gun carriages minus paint and oil, as they rumbled along ; all spoke of service and hard work—of harder work and keener service yet to come !

And now advanced a corps, on hearing the well-known air played by whose drums and fifes, Quentin made a leap from the saddle of Madrina, and forced a passage through the dense crowd, for it was the 25th, “The King’s Own Borderers,” with the Castle of Edinburgh shining on their colours, and all their old honours—“Nisi Dominus Frustra,” Egypt, and Egmont-op-Zee, that de-

bouched into the main street of Portalegre in a dense close column of sections, nine hundred men, all marching as *one* to their old quick step of a thousand memories—

“All the blue bonnets are bound for the border,”

or General Leslie's march to Long-Marston Moor in the days of the great civil war.

Endued with fresh strength by the sight of the regiment, Quentin burst through the crowd, and, reaching the grenadiers, grasped the hand of Rowland Askerne, on whose breast he saw a Portuguese order glittering.

“Quentin Kennedy, by all that's wonderful!” exclaimed the tall captain, grasping his hand warmly in return. “Quentin, my boy, how goes it?”

“Hallo! talk of the——” began Monkton, clapping him on the back; “we were just talking about you—thought you lost, gone, and all that sort of thing, a martyr to duty; but welcome back, my dear lad!”

“Where is old Major Middleton?”

“With Buckle in rear of the column.”

“And little Boyle?”

“Oh, Pimple is with Colyear carrying the colours; but *where* have you been, and *what* the deuce have you been about, eh?”

“You look pale and weary to begin a march this morning, sir,” said some of the soldiers, kindly, for Quentin was a favourite with them all.

"You must have a horse," said Askerne :  
"you look absolutely ill, Quentin ; how is this?"

"It is a long story, Askerne," replied Kennedy,  
with a haggard smile.

"Egad, I thought, and we *all* thought, the  
duty one beyond your years and experience."

"Make way here in front, please ; mark time,  
the grenadiers," said an authoritative voice as the  
column issued from the city gate, and an officer  
who nearly rode our hero down, pushed his horse  
between the band and the first section of the  
grenadier company. Quentin looked indignantly  
up, and found the cold, stern, and uncompromising  
eye of Cosmo, the Master of Rohallion, steadily  
bent upon him.

"You have returned, sir, *at last*?" was his  
stiff response to Quentin's hasty salute.

"It is little short of a miracle that I ever  
returned at all, Colonel Crawford ; I have under-  
gone no small danger I beg to assure you, and  
have but this instant entered Portalegre. I have  
acquitted myself of the duty with which the  
general did me the honour to entrust me. The  
junction will be formed with our division on the  
march, and I have a despatch from the Guerrilla  
Chief."

"For whom?"

"Sir John Hope, sir ; shall I give it to him  
in person?"

"No—I shall myself deliver it," replied Cosmo,

who feared naturally the favourable impression which Quentin might make on the good general, to whom he had been represented as unworthy ; “ get your musket and fall in with your company as soon as possible. We shall have some *other* work cut out for you ere long,” added Cosmo, with a dark and scornful smile, as he took, or rather snatched the despatch from Quentin, who seemed more fit for a sick bed than for marching among the sturdy grenadiers of the Borderers ; but for that day he was attached to the baggage guard, which was under Lieutenant Colville, and this arrangement for his comfort was made by the kindness of the old halberdier Norman Calder, who was now sergeant-major. He rode the spare horse of Major Middleton, a boon but for which he could never have kept up with the troops.

With the baggage marched the rear guard of the division, having with it the sick, the drunk, disorderly, and prisoners, together with a medley of followers of a not very reputable kind, whose presence was not conducive to reflection or comfort, and who noisily scorned alike control or discipline.

As Quentin was riding thus, he was passed from the rear by the general and his staff. The former gave him a keen and inquiring glance, answered his salute briefly, and passed on. Whether Cosmo had mentioned him favourably,

or the reverse, in delivering the despatch of Don Baltasar, he knew not; but he knew that when once the spiteful element attains ascendancy in the human heart, there is no mode in which it will not seek to be gratified and no measure to its malignity, and he sighed over an enmity that he dared neither to grapple with or hope to overcome; and all this he owed to the preference of Flora Warrender for him—her early friend and playmate in youth.

Well, there was some consolation in the cause!

Though his reception by the Master of Rohal-lion neither disappointed nor shocked him, it chilled the poor lad's heart, which grew heavy as he saw how unavailing and how fruitless were all his efforts to deserve praise or to win honour!



## CHAPTER V.

## HALT AT AZUMAR.

“Pleasures fled hence, wide now’s the gulf between us ;  
Stern Mars has routed Bacchus and sweet Venus :  
I can no more—the lamp’s fast fading ray  
Reminds me of parade ere break of day,  
Where, shivering, I must strut, though bleak the morning,  
Roused by the hateful drummer’s early warning.  
Come, then, my boat-cloak, let me wrap thee round,  
And snore in concert stretched upon the ground.”

*An Elegy.*

THE noisy racket maintained by those who were in custody of the rear-guard, the voices of others who whipped or cheered on the long string of baggage animals (Evora horses, Castilian mules, and sturdy burros or donkeys), the various novel sights and sounds incident to the march of Hope’s division, together with the appearance of the division itself winding down the deep valleys and up the steep mountains like a long and glittering snake, amid clouds of white dust, out of which the sheen of arms and the waving of colours came incessantly, won Quentin from his sadder thoughts, and he began to feel, after all he had undergone, an emotion of joy on finding himself among his old comrades—a joy that can only be known

by a soldier—by one forming a part of that great and permanent, but almost always happy family, a regiment of the line.

The morning was bright and breezy ; the large floating clouds cast their flying shadows over the sunlit landscape at times, adding alike to its beauty and the striking effect of the marching columns.

Weary of the dark and sallow Spaniards, Quentin's eyes had run along the ranks of the 25th, and their familiar faces, which seemed so fair and ruddy when contrasted with those of the nations they had come to free, were pleasant to look upon.

Their colours, with the castle triple-towered and the city motto ; the familiar bugle calls, and more than all, the old quick-step of General Leslie, which came floating rearward from time to time when the corps traversed an eminence, all spake to him of his new but moveable home, and the new associations he had learned to love.

Cosmo — the impracticable and inscrutable Cosmo Crawford—alone was the feature there that marred his prospects and blighted his pleasure !

He felt a sincere regret for poor Isidora, and this was not unmingled with a little selfish dread of her brother, De Saldos, the scowling Trevino, and others, when those guerillas joined the division, which they would probably do in the course of a day or so ; and what answer would he make

to them when they—and chiefly her brother—asked for the missing donna? He felt himself, indeed, between the horns of a dilemma, and many unpleasant forebodings mingled with his dreams of a brilliant future.

Amid these ideas recurred the longing to write home (how long, long seemed the time that had elapsed since he left it!) that the good Lord Rohallion and the gentle Lady Winifred—that dear Flora, and the old quartermaster too, might learn something of what he had seen, and done, and undergone since last they parted.

Had Cosmo, in any of his letters, ever written to announce that he was serving with the Borderers?

This was a question Quentin had frequently asked of himself, and he felt certain that the colonel had *not* done so, as in the other instance, and unless he had been cruelly misrepresented, Lord Rohallion or worthy John Girvan, and his old mentor the quaint dominie, would assuredly have written to him long since. Thus it was evident that in his correspondence with those at home in Carrick, the haughty Master had totally ignored his name.

Quentin's passion for Flora Warrender was a boyish devotion that mingled with all his love and all his memories of home. She was still a guiding star to his heart and hopes, the impulse of every thought, the mainspring of every act and deed; and thus Quentin felt that while this dear

girl at home loved him—as sister, friend, and sweetheart all combined, the spiteful hauteur of Cosmo was innocuous and pointless indeed.

As the paymaster of the regiment was riding with the rear-guard, Quentin lost no time in placing in his hands a sufficient number of those gold moidores that were found in the repositories of the late Corporal Raoul, of the 24th Chasseurs à Cheval (the spoil so liberally shared with him by Ribeaupierre), for the purpose of having them transmitted by bill or otherwise to the quartermaster at Rohallion, to repay the good man for the forty pounds he had placed at his disposal on the night he left the castle to return no more; and the fact of this debt being off his conscience made his spirit more buoyant than ever.

They were now marching through the province of Alentejo, the land of wine and oil, the granary of Portugal. Long-bearded goats and great bristly swine were to be seen in all the pastures, but few or no horned cattle. Proceeding on a line parallel with the Spanish frontier, they passed through the fortified town of Alegrete, which is moated round by the small river Caia, and there each regiment made its first brief halt for a few minutes before pushing on to Azumar, some fourteen miles from Portalegre, where the division was to pass the night.

Those halts on the line of march were so brief that the bugles of the leading corps always

sounded the advance when those of the rear were sounding the halt—ten minutes being the utmost time allotted.

On reaching Azumar, the lieutenant-general with his staff, and the colonels of corps, found quarters in the castle of the counts of that name, while the rest of the troops remained without the walls of the town.

The night was fine for the season, and clear and starry; a pinkish flush, that lingered beyond the summits of the Sierra Alpedrera to the westward, showed where the November sun had set. Tents were pitched for the whole force; but, before turning in for the night, Captain Askerne, Monkton, and other Borderers, preferred to sup in a cosy nook, sheltered by a ruined vineyard wall and a group of gigantic chestnuts, under which their servants had lighted a rousing fire of dry branches and wood, hewn down by the pioneers' hatchets.

Each added the contents of his havresack to the common stock of the party, and in the same fraternal fashion they shared the contents of their canteens, flasks, and bottles; thus various kinds of liquor, wine—brandy, and aguardiente, were contributed. What the repast lacked in splendour or delicacy was amply made up for by good humour and jollity, and to those who had an eye for the picturesque, that element was not wanting.

In the foreground the red glaring fire cast its light on the soldierly fellows we have introduced to the reader, as they sat or lounged on the grass in their regimental greatcoats, or cloaks of blue lined with scarlet, and their swords and belts beside them. The great chestnut trees were well-nigh leafless now, and with the rough masonry of the old wall, coated with heavily-leaved vine and ivy, formed a background.

Further off, in another direction, were the glares of other watchfires, around which similar groups were gathered—fires that shed their light in fitful flashes on the long rows of white bell-tents, on the dark figures that flitted to and fro, and on the forms of the distant and solitary sentinels, who stood steadily on their posts, the point of each man's bayonet shining like a red star as the flame tipped it with fire.

"Here comes Colville," said Monkton, as that individual, who was somewhat of a dandy and man of fashion, lounged slowly up, and cast himself languidly on the grass. "You have just been with the colonel, I suppose?"

"Yes—a deuced bore—to report the baggage all up with the battalion, the guard dismissed to their tents, and luckily, no casualties, save a mule that we lost in a bog."

"And you found him bland, as usual?"

"I found him quartered, not in the castle, as I expected, but in a deserted house half ruined by



the French," replied Colville, smiling; "the only habitable apartment was the kitchen, where our colours are lodged, and there he was eating a tough bullock steak, embers and all, just as his man had cooked it, on the ramrod of an old pistol. Egad, it was a picture!"

"A dainty kabob we should have called it in Egypt," said Major Middleton, laughing, with a huge magnum-bonum bottle of brandy-and-water placed between his fat legs. "Ah, the Honourable Cosmo should not have quitted his guardsman's comforts at the York Coffee-house, or Betty Neale's fruit-shop in St. James's Street,\* to rough it with the line in the Peninsula!"

"Did he compliment you on bringing up your disorderly charge without other loss than the mule?" asked Askerne.

"The devil a bit," yawned Colville; "with his glass stuck in his eye, he gave me one of his cool stares, and said, briefly, 'That will do, sir—to your company.'"

"Ah," grumbled Middleton, shaking his old head, while his pigtail swayed to and fro, "the colonel may have in his veins good blood, as it is called, but he has in his heart about as much of the milk of human kindness as if it belonged to an old lawyer."

The last part of the sentence, we are bound to

\* Two favourite resorts of the Household Brigade in those days.

add, was partly mumbled into the mouth of the magnum, which at that moment the major applied to his own.

"Here comes Dick Warriston," said Monkton, as an officer muffled in a cloak approached. "Hallo, Dick—how goes it, man?"

"Good evening, gentlemen—thought I should find you out. I heard on the march that our friend the volunteer had turned up again. How are you, Kennedy? glad to see you safe and sound once more," said Quentin's old friend, as they shook hands, and he cast his ample blue muffling aside, displaying his well-built figure, with the scarlet coat, green lapels, and massive gold epaulettes of the Scots Brigade.

"Be seated, Dick."

"Thanks, Askerne."

"Do you prefer a chair, or a sofa?" asked Monkton.

"The sofa, by all means," replied Warriston, stretching himself on the grass.

"There is brandy in that jar beside you, and Lisbon wine in the bottle. Here, under these fine old chestnuts, we are quite a select little picnic party, out of range of shot, shell, and everything——"

"Except fireflies and mosquitoes, Willie—a poor substitute for the girls, God bless them."

"Whose trumpets are these? what's up now?"

asked Monkton, as a sharp cavalry call rang upon the night.

"The 3rd Dragoons of the German Legion, Burgwesel's regiment, are watering their horses."

"Those Germans are regular trumps in their order and discipline," said Monkton; "but as for the Portuguese, damme, they are not worth their liquor. Even the Johnny Crapauds despise them. You have just come in time, Warriston, to hear Kennedy relate to us his interview with the guerilla chief; go on, lad, we are all listening," he added, as he and others proceeded to light their cigars or charge their pipes for a thorough bout of smoking.

Quentin told them briefly as much of his adventures as he deemed it necessary to relate or reveal, from the time of his parting from Askerne to the hour of his return to Portalegre. The slaughter of the French prisoners at Herreuela drew forth loud execrations and unanimous condemnation. His illness at the Villa de Maciera was alone a mystery which he could not explain, and the manner in which he consequently and naturally blundered in narrating this part of his story, drew forth the laughter and the empty jests of the younger portion of his audience.

"Damme," said Monkton, "you were a bold fellow, Kennedy, to become spooney on the sister of such a melo-dramatic individual—such a regular 'heavy villain' as this guerilla De Saldos!

Egad, the sight of the fellow, with those black moustachios you have described, each like a snake twisted under his hooked nose, would be enough to frighten the French !”

“ Very singular style of person, your Spanish friend, I should think,” lisped Colville, with his glass in his eye.

“ Remarkably so,” added Ensign Pimple, raising his white eyebrows ; “ decidedly a dangerous fellow to have a shindy with !”

“ A most interesting individual, no doubt,” said Buckle the adjutant ; “ but begad, not at all suited to a quiet rubber or a little supper party ; takes mustard to his lamb, perhaps, and pepper to his enchanted eggs, but knows nothing, I’ll be bound, of a devilled kidney, a broiled bone, and a tumbler of decent whisky toddy. ‘ Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard ;’ he is all spasms, big boots, and blue fire—eh ?”

While they jested thus, and Quentin, with something of annoyance and vexation, looked from one to another, Askerne and Warriston, who were men of graver mood, had been eyeing him attentively.

“ My poor lad,” said the former, laying a hand kindly on his shoulder, “ all this that you have related was a sad trial for you—a great test of courage and discretion for one so young to be subjected to, especially in a foreign country, and among a people so fierce and lawless.”

"Your pistols were always my friends," said Quentin, laughing; "I thought of them in every extremity, Captain Askerne; but fortunately never had to use them."

"Then keep them, Quentin, my boy, as a little present from me," said the grenadier.

"But to deprive you——"

"Matters nothing—I took a handsome pair of silver-mounted pops from the holsters of a French officer the other day."

"Askerne has but anticipated me," said War-riston; "I had resolved to give you mine, though they were a gift to me from my father's old friend the Conservator of Scottish Privileges at Campvere, when the Scots Brigade came home and turned their backs upon honest old Holland for ever."

"Well, Kennedy," said Monkton, with a droll twinkle in his eye, "we've heard all your adventures, at least *so much* as you wisely, prudently, and discreetly choose to tell us; but I cannot help thinking that we could make a few interesting notes on the time spent in that ruined Château en Espagne. Was the donna young, black-eyed, beautiful, and all that sort of thing, eh?"

"By Jove," added Colville, in the same tone, "you are a regular St. Francis, or St. Anthony! But unlike you, if the donnas on the other side of the frontier think *me* worth their while, I am ready to be subjected to any amount of seduc-

tion the dear creatures may choose to put in practice."

Affecting neither to hear Monkton's banter nor Colville's addition, Quentin turned to Askerne, admiring the order that glittered on his left breast.

"This is Portuguese?" said he.

"Yes, Quentin—the Tower and Sword—given to me by the Junta of Oporto for capturing an exploring party, consisting of an officer and ten French dragoons of Ribeaupierre's regiment, whom I cut off in a narrow valley near Portalegre (on the very day after you left us), where I had been sent with twenty of ours to bring in forage."

"Askerne, I do envy you this decoration!" said Quentin, whose eyes sparkled with genuine pleasure and admiration, for medals were almost unknown in the British army then, and the Bath, as now, was only given to field officers; "and they were, you say, dragoons of Ribeaupierre?"

"The same corps with some of whom you fell in among the Spanish mountains. They are quartered in Valencia de Alcantara."

"Ribeaupierre!" said the bantering Monkton; "there is a name for an intelligent young man to go to bed with! It smacks of Anne Radcliffe's mysterious romances of 'Sicily' and 'The Forest.'"

"Yet it is the name of an officer as brave as



any in France," said Quentin; "the general who bears it was a subaltern with Napoleon in the Regiment of La Fere, a town on an island of the Oise, where it was originally raised."

"Like that corps, the 24th Chasseurs à Cheval were originally under the monarchy," said Warriston.

"Their uniform is light green, faced and lapelled with white?"

"Exactly, Quentin—the same uniform worn by the Emperor on almost every occasion," replied Warriston; "the 24th were long known as the Disinterested Regiment of Chartres."

"An honourable title," said Askerne; "how came they to win it, thou man of anecdote?"

"About nineteen years ago, when the troubles of the Revolution were first beginning, the regiment was quartered at Le Mans, a town of France situated on the river Sarthe, if you have not forgotten your geography, Rowland. The corps then belonged—such was the French aristocratic term—to Louis Philip Joseph, Duke of Orleans,\* the notorious 'Egalité' who was guillotined by the mob in 1793; but it was denominated 'of Chartres,' from the county of the name gifted to his ancestor by Louis XIV.

"The outrages of the Revolutionists were at their height around the whole of Mans. Day and night the dragoons of Chartres remained

\* Father of Louis Philippe I., late King of the French.

with their accoutrements on and their horses saddled ready to assist the magistrates and all peaceable citizens. Every day brought tidings of new horrors in the rural districts, and every night saw the sky reddened by the flames of burning châteaux, convents, and abbey-churches, whose occupants were given to pillage and death.

“So resolute and orderly were the dragoons of Chartres, so sturdily and bravely did they protect the weak against the strong, enforce the public peace, and conduct the transit of corn for the poor, that the magistrates deemed it necessary to make some acknowledgment of their services. A vote of thanks from the municipality preceded a gratuity of eight hundred livres (no great sum among us certainly, but a handsome one on the other side of the Channel) to be distributed among the three hundred Chasseurs of the corps.

“In a large bag the money, made, by the way, from the church bells of France, was sent to the colonel, who gave it to the men to dispose of as they pleased; upon which, instead of dividing it among themselves, they resolved unanimously to bestow it upon a portion of the very people who had been tormenting their lives for the last six months.

“One of the dragoons, a mere youth named Raoul, waited upon the Rector of St. Nicholas in the city of Le Mans and handing him the bag with its contents, said—

“ ‘Monsieur le Recteur, we want not this money. The pay of His Majesty, whom God and St. Louis long preserve! secures us in all that a soldier requires; but the poor, though they are the children of God, are not so blessed. We, the dragoons of Chartres, beg, therefore, that you will accept of this for their use, and put it to the common stock for the aged and the indigent.’ ”

“And this soldier was named Raoul?” said Quentin, who felt something like a shock when he heard him mentioned.

“So the newspapers said,” replied Warriston.

Quentin was silent, but the face of one of the dead dragoons whom he had seen at Herreruela—he who had been dragged by his stirrup—came vividly to memory; while, such is the effect of fancy, the moidores that remained in his pocket seemed to become heavy as lead.

The hour was late now, and he was completely overcome by fatigue. With a knapsack for a pillow he dropped asleep, while his more hardy comrades sat smoking and drinking, and discussing the fortune of the coming struggle in Spain.

As the light of the watch-fire waned and fell in flickering gleams on his features, they seemed pinched, pale, and wan.

“God help the poor fatherless boy,” said Captain Warriston, with considerable emotion; “what hard fate brings him here? He seems

quite a waif among us, and one that is hardly used by you fellows of the 25th in particular. I wish I had him with me in the Scots Brigade. This last devilish piece of duty has broken him completely down !”

“No, no, Warriston ; there is good stuff in him yet,” said Rowland Askerne, as he divested his broad shoulders of his own ample cloak, and kindly spread it over the sleeper. “At his age, I had neither father nor mother nor friend to do *this* for me, and I too was, like him, a poor volunteer !”

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE ADVANCE INTO SPAIN.

“ Oh, life has many a varied tint,  
Has many a bright and lovely hue,  
Though care upon the brow may print  
A sadder, darker colour too.  
But hope still casts her rainbow wings  
O'er many a scene of care and strife,  
And gilds the hours round which she flings  
The bright and varied tints of life.”

CARPENTER.

SIR JOHN HOPE'S division continued to march by the strong old frontier town of Elvas, which crowns a rocky hill not far from where the Guadiana sweeps south towards the sea.

“ To-morrow,” said Monkton, as he placed the glaring red cockade of Ferdinand VII. on his shako, “ we shall be airing our most dulcet Spanish in Old Castile, learning to dance the bolero, to tilt up our legs in the fandango, and to twangle on the guitar.”

“ I fear, Dick, that Marshal Soult will cut out more serious work for us,” said Major Middleton.

“ Do we halt at Elvas?” asked some one, as the regiment approached the town.

“ Yes, thank Heaven !” exclaimed Monkton.

"We have marched twenty miles to-day, and to-night I am going to the camp of the 28th."

"On duty?"

"No; but because they have fallen in with a cask of whisky."

"Whisky!" exclaimed several voices. "Whisky here?"

"The best Farintosh. It was taken from the wreck of a Scotch transport in Maciera Bay, and, may I never see morning, if I don't beg, borrow, or steal at least a canteenful. The Slashers wont refuse me, I am sure."

Next morning, a march of ten miles brought them in sight of the great castle of Badajoz—that place of terrible but immortal memory!

Flanked by the waters of the Rivollas and Guadiana, flowing between vineyards and olive groves, it towered in clear sharp outline against the pure blue sky, on cliffs three hundred feet in height, with all its grim batteries and tiers of cannon bristling, row on row; its eight great bastions, each standing forth with one angle bathed in strong yellow sunlight, and the other sunk in deep purple shadow; the rich gothic spires and countless pinnacles of its churches and convents, and the glittering casements of its white-walled mansions that clustered on its rocky steep, all shining in the warm glow, while, in the background, extended far away the long green wavy outline of the mountains of Toledo.



Kellerman and Victor had alike been foiled before it, as the Portuguese had been in the days of the Archduke John of Austria, and now the scarlet and yellow banners of King Ferdinand VII. were still waving triumphantly upon the towers of San Cristoval, San Roque, and the Forts of Picurina and Pardaleras. The united clangour of, perhaps, five hundred bells, mellowed by the distance, came merrily upon the morning breeze, a welcome to the British. Then a white puff of smoke from the highest battery of the grand old citadel announced the first gun of a royal salute. Another and another followed, flashing from the dark embrasures, while the pale wreaths curled upward and floated away, till the whole round of twenty-one pieces was complete ; but, as the city was two miles distant, each report came faintly to the ear, and at an interval after the flash.

Ere long, the twenty-eight arches of the noble bridge of the Guadiana rang beneath the hoofs of our Light Dragoons, as the advanced guard began to cross, and, amid the clangour of bells in spire and campanile, and the "vivas" of the assembled thousands, the reiterated shouts of "Viva los Ingleses !" "Viva los Escotos !" the infantry found themselves defiling through the lower streets of Badajoz and entering Spain.

Eyes dark and bright sparkled with pleasure and welcome from many an open lattice, and many a fan and veil were waved, and many a

white hand kissed to the passing troops, as, with colours waving and bayonets fixed, they passed under the gaily crowded balconies on their way to the Guadiana.

Escorted by a guard of glittering Spanish lancers, mounted on beautiful jennets, a quaint old coach, such as we only see depicted in fairy tales or pantomimes, came slowly rumbling forward on its carved and gilded wheels. It was gorgeous with burnished brasses and coats armorial, but was shaped like a gigantic apple pie, drawn by six sleek fat mules, that were almost hidden under their elaborate trappings; and each pair had a little lean dark postilion, in cocked-hat and epaulettes, floundering away in boots like water-buckets, while, at the doors on both sides, hung two tripod stools, as the means of ingress and egress.

But, in front of this remarkable conveyance, the advanced guard halted with carbine on thigh, the officers saluting and the trumpets sounding, while the general and staff approached bare-headed, with hat in hand, for in the recesses of this apple-pie were the most Reverend Padres en Dios, the Archbishop of Santiago, the Bishop Suffragan of Compostella, Senores the Captain-general, the Alcalde of Badajoz, and a great many more, in civic robes and military uniforms, with crosses and medals, and all of these persons clambered out of the interior, and descended on terra

firma by means of the three-legged stools aforesaid, coach-steps being as yet unknown in the realms of his Most Catholic majesty.

"Well," said Monkton, "this turn-out beats all the buggies I ever saw. By Jove! it is like Noah's ark on wheels. Such a team it would be to 'tool' to Epsom with!"

We shall skip the long and solemn, the flattering and bombastic speeches made by the Spanish officials, and the curt but manly responses given by the British on this auspicious occasion. Suffice it to say that, after a brief halt, the division continued its route by easy marches. The green hill of Albuera—the scene of a glorious battle three years after—ere long became visible on the right flank; but the day passed without any tidings being heard of the guerillas of Don Baltasar de Saldos, a circumstance which, in the course of conversation with Buckle the adjutant, the Master of Rohallion contrived that Quentin should know. Naturally he felt anxious about the matter, and feared in his heart that perhaps he had personally something to do with the non-appearance of this famous partisan chief.

Twenty-four miles beyond Badajoz brought the division, with all the heavy artillery of the army, to Montijo, a little town of Estremadura, where a camp was formed for the night near the Guadiana.

As contrasted with "the Granary of Portugal,"

through which they had latterly passed, the barrenness of wasted and long-neglected Estremadura impressed all with poor ideas of Spain.

"The great Condé was right," said Warriston, as the little group of the other evening assembled again, in nearly a similar manner, to sup by their watchfire, which was lighted near a deserted pottery in a field where the Indian corn had grown and been reaped; "right indeed, when he said if you<sup>1</sup> wish to know what actual want is, carry on a war in Spain!"

"And the comforts of a Peninsular tour like ours are in no way enhanced when one's exchequer is low," said Monkton.

"True, Willie, and there is a wonderful sympathy between the animal spirits and the breeches-pocket."

"And I, for one, can show 'a regular soldier's thigh;' my purse has long since collapsed."

"Line it with these, Monkton," said Quentin, slipping a half-dozen moidores into his hand.

"What are these?—moidores, by the gods of the Greeks! But thanks, my friend, I shall pay you at San Pedro, where I shall bring our paymaster to book. I could lavish a colonel's pay, if I had it, which is never likely to be the case, for we're a devilish slow regiment, Quentin."

"But some of our Highland corps are slower still," remarked an officer.

"I have known a fellow to be four years an

ensign in one of them, and every month at least once under fire all the time," said Askerne.

"They never sell out or purchase in, and then there is no killing them by bullets, starvation, or fatigue."

"For the baggage guard to-morrow, Mr. Monkton," said old Sergeant-major Calder, approaching the group, who were lounging on the grass; "for the colours, Mr. Hardinge and Mr. Boyle."

He saluted and retired, while Monkton apostrophized the baggage guard in pretty round terms.

"I should like to have halted one night at Badajoz," said Colville; "there is a theatre there, and other means of spending money which smack of civilization. Conyers——"

"Who's he?"

"Conyers of the 10th Hussars, one of Hope's extra aides-de-camp, says there are some beautiful girls to be seen on the promenade of poplars, the Prado beside the river, in the evening, where they all go veiled, with fireflies strung in their hair, producing a very singular effect."

"I would rather be whispering soft nothings into their pretty ears and over their white shoulders than be bivouacking here," said Monkton.

"I believe you, my friend; but perhaps the knife of some devil of a lover or *cortejo* might give your whisperings a point you never expected," replied Askerne.

"Try a sip from my canteen," said Monkton; "it contains some of the stuff I got the other night at the camp of the 28th, and better you'll find it than the aguardiente of the Spanish Hot-tentots. Take a pull, Quentin, as a nightcap, and then turn in under that laurel bush and sleep if you can, under your own bays, till the bugle sounds the 'rouse.'"

Remembering the injunctions of the worthy Padre Florez, Quentin declined.

"Well, well, boy, as you please," said Monkton, slinging his canteen behind him; "but what the devil's that? Cavalry!"

"It is the staff—the general," exclaimed Askerne, as they all started to their feet, and proceeded to buckle on their swords, as Sir John Hope, with several mounted staff officers and commanders of corps, among whom was Colonel Cosmo Crawford, approached slowly, checking their horses, and talking with considerable animation, while their flowing scarlet and white plumes, their cocked-hats, aiguillettes, and orders, the holsters, and housings of their horses, were all visible in the glare of the watchfire, on which the servants and pioneers were heaping fresh branches for the night, and the occasional flashes of which brought out in strong light or threw into deep shadow the martial group, imparting a Rembrandtish tone to the horses and their riders.

"What is this you say, Conyers?" Sir John



was heard to ask ; “ repeat it to Colonel Crawford of the 25th. You bring us——”

“ Most serious intelligence, sir,” replied Conyers, who wore the blue and scarlet of the 10th Hussars, and who seemed flushed and excited by a long ride. “ I have just come on the spur from Badajoz, and there tidings have reached the Captain-general that yesterday the Spaniards, under Don Joachim Blake, were again completely discomfited at Espinosa, and that the Estremaduran army, which was beaten the day before at Gamonal, is demoralized or cut to pieces ; and that the first, second, and fourth corps of the French army, seventy thousand strong, are free to act in *any* quarter.”

“ First, second, and fourth—these are the corps of Victor, Bessières, and Lefebvre.”

“ Exactly, Sir John.”

“ If they march against us, the whole siege and field artillery of the army may be lost !” exclaimed Hope.

“ Nor is this all, sir,” continued the aide-de-camp, speaking rapidly and with growing excitement ; “ the movement made by the guerillas of Baltasar de Saldos towards the hill of Albuera, to cover our advance, has been anticipated !”

“ *Anticipated !*”

“ Yes, Sir John.”

“ How, how ?” asked several voices.

“ General de Ribeaupierre with his whole bri-

gade, consisting of the 24th Chasseurs à Cheval, the Westphalian Light Horse, numbering five hundred and sixty sabres, and the Dragoons of Napoleon, five hundred strong, aided by Laborde's corps and some field guns, issued from Valencia de Alcantara, attacked the guerillas in a valley near San Vincente, and captured their five pieces of artillery, killing the Conde de Maciera, a captain of Lancers, who made three charges to retake them; so De Saldos informs the Captain-general at Badajoz, that there must be treachery somewhere."

"Treachery," reiterated the general, while Cosmo Crawford put his glass to his eye and glanced with a malicious smile towards the group where Quentin, with others, stood listening to all this with the deepest interest, for until the "Courier," or some English paper reached them, they were often ignorant for months of what was enacted in other parts of Spain.

"Don Baltasar is on the march, however, to join us," resumed Captain Conyers; "he has made a détour by the left bank of the Valverde, and by to-morrow evening hopes to make his report to you in person."

"I thank you, Captain Conyers," said the general; "come, gentlemen, this is not so bad after all! To-morrow night we halt at Merida."

"Had you not better despatch a message to De Saldos, saying so," suggested an officer.

"My horse is used up, sir," said Captain

Conyers, smiling ; “ he has gone forty-five miles, on a feed of chopped whin, over the most infernal roads too ! ”

“ There is that young volunteer of ours,” said Cosmo ; “ he acquitted himself so well before, Sir John—— ”

“ That we should give him an opportunity of doing so again,” interrupted the lieutenant-general.

“ A good idea ! ” muttered some of the staff.

“ Mr. Kennedy,” said Cosmo, beckoning forward the anxious listener ; “ a message saying where we shall halt to-morrow is to be despatched to the guerilla De Saldos ; you will, of course, only be too happy to bear it ? ”

“ I beg most respectfully to decline, sir,” said Quentin, emphatically, and with growing anger.

“ What the devil, sirrah ? ” Cosmo was beginning.

“ Ha—indeed, and wherefore ? ” asked the general.

“ I am scarcely able to keep up with the regiment, General Hope,” replied Quentin ; “ I have been seriously ill, and am more fit for hospital than for duty.”

The general knit his brows, and Cosmo dealt Quentin, through his eyeglass, a glance of cool scrutiny, that deepened into withering scorn or hate without alloy.

"Very well, we must send an orderly dragoon," said Sir John Hope, turning away.

"Take care, Mr. Kennedy," said Cosmo, "lest at a future time this refusal may be remembered against you to your disadvantage."

"Crawford doesn't like you, Quentin," said Askerne, after the staff rode away; "it is a great pity, for, though cold and haughty, he is a brave and good officer."

"Damme, don't scoff at the service, Askerne," said Monkton, with mock severity.

Poor Quentin had a heavy heart that night; we are not sure that he did not shed some bitter and unavailing tears, for the forebodings of coming evil banished sleep when he most needed it, and crushed the soul within him.

But his comrades as usual sat long by the watch-fire, passing the night with song, jest, and anecdote. They had neither care for the present nor fear for the future, and their jollity formed a strong contrast to his forlorn sadness.

"I think we should now turn in," said Monkton; "we march betimes to-morrow; to your tents, O Borderers! But what the deuce is that?"

"The générale," said Colville.

"Already!"

"Already, Monkton; and there sounds the gathering of the Gordons in the streets of Montijo."

"The nights are very short in the Penin-in-

insula," said Monkton, scrambling up and making several attempts to buckle his belt.

"You'll have to sober yourself on the march, Willie," said Askerne, giving him a rough shake.

"By Jove! to have to fall in when one should go to sleep—to nod and drowse and dream while tramping on and on, your nose coming every minute down on the tin canteen or the knapsack of the man in front of you! It is miserable work; but what with contract powder that wont explode, ammunition shoes warranted not to last, diseased bullocks shot while at fever heat and eaten half raw, we are little likely to beat the French, either in fighting or marching."

"Unless, like them, we learn to hang an occasional commissary or contractor," said old Middleton, as he sprang with agility on his horse; and the regiment formed open column of companies in the dark, for daybreak was yet an hour distant.

## CHAPTER VII.

## RETROGRESSION.

“Lucius, the horsemen are returned from viewing  
The number, strength, and posture of our foes,  
Who now encamp within a short hour’s march.  
On the high point of yonder western tower,  
We ken them from afar, the setting sun  
Plays on their shining arms and burnished helmets,  
And covers all the field with gleams of fire.”

*Cato, Act v.*

ERE noon next day, while the division was traversing the grassy plain amid which lies the ancient city of Merida, the sound of distant firing on their right flank announced the repulse, by the guerillas, of some of the cavalry of Laborde’s corps, when making a reconnoissance. The light white puffs of the musketry that curled along the green hill-sides, came nearer and nearer, and it soon became known that the band of the formidable De Saldos el Estudiante, above two thousand strong, had joined the division of Sir John Hope; as the newspaper of Lord Rohallion had it, a measure fully arranged “by the skill and courage” of our young volunteer. But though the army continued its march for several days, no



recognition of his service, in orders or otherwise, ever reached him from head-quarters, and happily for himself, he saw nothing of the dreaded Baltasar, who fortunately was left in the rear, with an open sabre cut.

Ribeaupierre's cavalry brigade abandoned Valencia de Alcantara without firing a shot, on its flank being turned, and fell back, no one knew exactly where or in what direction.

Hope's division halted at Merida, a place eminently calculated to excite the deepest interest in the thinking or historical visitor, by its ancient remains; its great bridge of more than eighty arches spanning the broad waters of the Guadiana; the ruins of its Roman castle, which Alfonso the Astrologer gifted to the knights of Santiago, and in the vaults of which Baltasar's guerillas had thrust some unfortunate French prisoners; its triumphal arch of Julius Cæsar, under which the division passed with drums beating and colours flying, and its crumbling amphitheatre:—Merida, of old the Rome of Spain, and the home of the aged and disabled soldiers of the 5th and 10th legions of Augustus Cæsar, whose great pyramid still towers there, amid the ruins of its contemporaries.

There was ample accommodation in the town for the officers of the division; but yet not enough to prevent a dispute about rank, or precedence, or something else, between a Captain Winton of

the Borderers, and an officer of the German Legion. So they met about daybreak near the Baths of Diana. The former was attended by Askerne of the Grenadiers, and the latter by Major Burgwesel of his own corps, and at the second fire Winton shot his man dead, Cosmo coolly lending his pistols for this occasion, without comment or inquiry, either of which would have been ungentlemanly, according to the temper or spirit of the service then.

Prior to this event, on the evening the division halted, Quentin, about the hour of sunset, had wandered to the old Roman aqueduct which lies near the city, and he remained for a time lost in thought while surveying its mouldering arches, and the piles of columns, bases, flowered capitals, enriched friezes, Corinthian entablatures, and broken statues, lying amid the weeds and long grass, the remains of the once superb temples, ruined by the Goths and Moors; and perhaps he was thinking of his old dominie at Rohallion, and the worthy pedant's profound veneration for the ancient days of Rome, the mistress of all the then known world.

The place was solitary and almost buried amid old vineyards and groves of now leafless trees. Under one of the mouldering arches, from which, notwithstanding the lateness of the season, masses of luxuriant creepers and trailers were yet hanging, Quentin, leaning on his musket, lingered to

admire the scenery and the glory of the golden sunset, which spread its farewell radiance over the vast plain, of which Merida, from its situation on a lofty eminence, commands a view in every direction—the olive groves yet green and waving in the breeze, and the winding Guadiana, while far away in distance, all tinted in dusky blue or russet brown, but edged with flaming gold, stretched the mountain sierras, range over range, towards the north.

From the pleasant contemplation of this evening landscape he was suddenly roused by seeing a pair of fierce dark eyes glaring into his own.

It was the guerilla Trevino, of whom it seems a mockery to give his once prefix of Padre!

“So, senor,” said he, with a terrible grimace, “we meet again, do we?”

“It seems so, senor,” replied Quentin, haughtily, as he stepped back a pace, “and what then?”

“Only that I find you in very bad company.”

“I am alone, senor.”

“Well, and you alone form the company I refer to,” replied the Spaniard, insolently, and with a savage grin, while the fingers of his right hand clutched the haft of his knife, and his thumb was firmly planted on the pommel. There was no mistaking this action or his air for anything else than open hostility, so Quentin warily stepped back another pace, and glanced hastily round to be assured that no other guerillas were lurking near,

and then grasping the barrel of his musket, which was unloaded, he stood ready on his defence against an antagonist who possessed, perhaps, twice his bodily strength.

“What do you mean, Senor Trevino, by accosting me in this manner?” he demanded.

“I mean, *hombre*, that I have been lately at the Convent of Sant Engracia, and that Donna Isidora has *not* been heard of there; so, in the meantime, I and two or three others have sworn across our knives to kill you, that is all; leaving to time to reveal what you have done with her.”

Something of this kind was what Quentin had long dreaded; but disdaining any attempt to explain or expostulate, and exasperated by the injustice to which he was subjected, he clutched his musket and said sternly—

“Stand back, fellow!”

“Ha! *perro y ladron* (dog and thief)—you will have it, then!”

With head stooped, body crouching, and knife drawn, the Spaniard was springing like a tiger upon Quentin, when the brass butt of Brown Bess, swung by no sparing or erring hand, fell full on his left temple, from whence it slid very unpleasantly down on his collar-bone, and tumbled him bleeding and senseless on the ground.

After this, Quentin, who was in no mood to feel any compunction about the affair, turned and left him to recover as he might, resolving, until

in a more secure neighbourhood, not to indulge his taste for the picturesque or antique, and feeling exceeding thankful that he had not left his musket as usual in his tent.

"You were just in time, sir," said a voice, as Quentin turned to leave the ruined aqueduct; "an instant later and that Spanish thief had put his knife into you."

The speaker was Allan Grange, of the 25th, who, stooping down, took from Trevino's relaxed hand his knife, a very ugly pig-butcher-like weapon. A guerilla, doubtless some friend of Trevino's, was hastening forward at this moment, but on seeing Quentin joined by a comrade he drew back a little way, and so the affair ended for the time; but this was not the last that Quentin was fated to hear of the encounter.

By the ruinous town of Medellin (the birth-place of the conqueror of Mexico), where the Guadiana was fabled of old to rise, after running twenty miles under ground; by the wretched town of Miajadas, and by Truxillo, with its feudal towers and Moorish walls, when the French had ruined alike the house in which Pizarro was born and the noble palace of the Conde de Lopera, the division continued its march amid rough and stormy weather, and, after passing Talavera de la Reyna—so called from the queen of Alonzo XI., to distinguish it from other places of the same name—halted, on the 22nd day of

November, at the Escorial, that magnificent palace, twenty-five miles from Madrid, built by Philip II. in commemoration of the battle of St. Quentin, a holy personage, to whom he solemnly dedicated it.

With his regiment, our hero bivouacked outside the little village of Escorial de Abajo. The night was a fearful one of storm. Over the bare and desolate country the winter wind swept in tempestuous gusts and the rain fell in torrents, swelling all the streams of the Guadarama—for the weather was completely broken now.

In that horrible bivouac poor Quentin lost his blanket—his whole household furniture. Near him lay a soldier's wife with a sick infant; he spread it over both and left it with them; when the regiment shifted its ground next day the mother and child dropped by the wayside, so Quentin never saw them or his blanket again.

Here, as Sir John Moore had foreseen, and as General Hope had stated his fears to Cosmo, the enemy did *press forward* from Valladolid and Tordesillas, and the advanced posts of their cavalry being reported in sight, strong guards were posted and picquets thrown forward in front of the Escorial.

This forward movement of the French threatened to cut off Hope's communication with Sir John Moore, who was then at Salamanca, and might lose his artillery.



To prevent this, and effect a junction with the main body under the general, Hope marched from the Escorial on the 27th of November, and crossed the long and lofty mountain chain of the Guadarama, the cliffs of which are so steep that the Spaniards of old likened them to straight spindles. Moving by Villa Castin, a market-town at their base, he halted at Avila, on the right bank of the Ajada, where Quentin was billeted in the same house with Monkton, in that dark and narrow street in which the spiritual Maria Theresa was born—" *Nuestra Serifica Madre*," as she is named by the old Castilians.

The enemy's light cavalry were still pressing on, and at times their carbines were heard popping in the distance, when responding to our skirmishers. It was the gloomy morning of the first day of December; the rain was still falling in torrents, and the sky looked dark and louring.

Save an occasional exchange of shots between outposts and petty skirmishes, nothing of interest had taken place with the enemy, and the toil of this retrograde movement dispirited the troops. Even Monkton, one of the most heedless men in the regiment, was sullen and spiritless. Wearied by their long march, he and Quentin sat in their bare and miserable billet, silent and moody. It was in the house of a hatter, or maker of sombreros, facing the dark and narrow street, which was overshadowed by a gigantic parish church,

the bells of which were ringing in honour of the British, and their notes came mournfully on the passing gusts of wind.

It was indeed a wild evening in Avila. The rain was pouring down in one uniform and ceaseless sheet, the wind bellowing in the thoroughfares with a melancholy sound, and the swollen Ajada was boiling in foam against the piers of its ancient bridge.

A miserable meal of tough beef, boiled with a little rice in a pipkin, had been served up by Monkton's servant, a poor half-starved fellow, whose single shirt had long since been reduced to its collar and wristbands, whose red coat showed innumerable darns and patches, and who now regretted the days when he forsook his plough on Tweedside to become a soldier. With their feet planted on a brasero of charcoal, cloaks muffled about them for warmth, and cigars in their mouths, our two warriors ruefully surveyed the bare whitewashed walls of their room, and then looked at each other.

"Rain, rain!" exclaimed Monkton; "what an infernal climate! And this is the land of grapes and sunshine! I've never seen such drops since I was in the West Indies with our flank companies, at the capture of Martinique."

At that moment, amid the lashing of the rain on wall and window, the roar of the wind, and the rush of the gorged gutters, the tramp of a

horse was heard, and the voice of Buckle, who was brigade-adjutant for the day, was heard shouting—

“Fall in, the outlying picquets of the 1st brigade—sound bugle!”

But his voice and the half-strangled bugle notes were alike borne away by the tempest.

A heavy malediction escaped Monkton. This worthy sub had puffed at his fragrant Havannah till he had smoked himself into such a soothed state that he was quite indisposed “to be bothered about anything or anybody,” as he said; and now he remembered that on halting the sergeant-major had warned him for out-picquet.

He sprang up and kicked the brasero aside, sending the smouldering charcoal flying right and left.

“Out-picquet!” he exclaimed, “and the rain coming down in bucketfuls! Damme, who would be a soldier abroad, while there are chimneys to sweep at home?”

A smart single knock now came to the door, as he belted his sword beneath his cloak.

“Come in—is that you, sergeant-major?”

“Yes, sir,” said old Norman Calder, who was muffled in his grey great-coat, which, as he said, “smoked like a killogie.”

“Where are these infernal picquets parading?”

“I’ve just come to show you, sir; they are falling in under the arcades opposite the Bishop’s

palace, where the staff are quartered. Fresh ammunition has just been served out to all."

"That looks like work."

"Yes, sir; the enemy's cavalry are in force upon the road towards Villa Castin, in our rear."

"We have heard little else since we fell back from the Escorial."

As a volunteer is always the first man for any perilous duty, Quentin buttoned his great-coat over his accoutrements and musket, and set out to join Monkton's picquet, which Buckle was parading, with several others, under some quaint old arcades of stone, above which the houses, with broad balconies and rich entablatures, remnants of the days when Avila was rich and flourishing, rose to a considerable height.

The daylight was nearly gone now, and already the half-drenched and half-fed soldiers looked pale and weary.

"As the weather has been frequently wet, and as the duty of to-night is an important one, you will be careful, gentlemen, to inspect the arms, flints, and ammunition of your picquets," said Buckle; "and as the pricklers may not be deemed sufficient to indicate the state of the touch-holes, the butts will be brought to the front."

"Butts to the front," an order then in use, was given by Monkton and each officer in succession, after which the ranks were opened, and every man blew down the barrel of his musket, so that

by applying a hand to the touch-hole the real state of the vent was ascertained by the inspector.

“Handle arms—with ball cartridge, prime, and load—secure arms!” followed rapidly, and away went the out-picquets, double-quick, through rain and mire, wind and storm, to their several posts, Monkton’s being a mile and a half beyond the bridge of the Ajada, in tolerably open ground, interspersed with groups of little trees.

Under one of these he sheltered his picquet, and two hundred yards in front of it posted his line of sentinels, with orders not to walk to and fro, but to stand steadily on their posts, to look straight to their front, to fire on all who could not give the countersign, and to keep up a regular communication with each other and with those of the picquets on both flanks; and then each man was left for his solitary hour, the time allotted for such duty when in front of an enemy.

About daybreak, after a short nap in the thicket, and after imbibing a sip from his canteen of rum grog—the last of its contents—Quentin found himself on this solitary but important duty, posted on the centre of the highway, gazing steadily into the murky obscurity before him, and thanking Heaven in his heart that the rain had ceased, and that the cold and biting December wind was passing away.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE ENEMY.

"'Tis true, unruffled and serene I've met  
The common accidents of life, but here  
Such an unlooked-for storm of ills falls on me  
It beats down all my strength—I cannot bear it."

ADDISON.

THIS was not the first occasion on which Quentin had enacted the part of sentinel; but never had he done so with the knowledge that the enemy was before him, and perhaps at that moment closer than he had any idea of, among the mist that obscured the landscape.

All was quiet in front and rear; save the drip of the last night's rain from an over-charged leaf, or the croaking of the bull-frogs in a marsh close by, not a sound broke the stillness.

The dull grey winter morning stole slowly in; the distant mountain peaks of the Guadarama grew red, but all else remained opaque and dim, save the jagged summits of that lofty *sierra*—a Spanish word very descriptive of a range of conical hills, being evidently (as we are informed by a letter of the dominie) derived from *serra*, the Latin word for a saw.



On the slope of a hill, at a little distance from where Quentin stood, was a gibbet, a strong post about twenty feet high, having two horizontal beams crosswise on its summit, and from these four arms there hung four robbers, each by the neck, and their long black hair waved over their faces as they swung slowly to and fro in the morning wind, with the ravens wheeling around them, and perching on the arms of the gibbet.

The bull-frogs in the marsh croaked vigorously, and like every other place in Spain, even this fetid swamp had its legend; for here it was that the Cid, Rodrigo de Bivar, when proceeding at the head of twenty young and brave hidalgos, on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint James at Compostella, saw an aged and half-naked leper in the midst of the slough. Leaping from his horse, Rodrigo dragged the poor man forth, and to the wrath and disgust of his mail-shirted companions, seated him on his own charger, Babieca; thereafter he set him at table with them, and finally, in the extremity of his humility and Christian charity, shared his bed with him. In the night the cavalier awoke, and beheld the leper standing on a cloud above his bed, midway between the floor and ceiling, surrounded by a blaze of light and clad in white and shining robes; and ere he vanished he informed the Cid that he was Saint Lazarus, who had taken the form of a leper to test his charity, which was so

commendable that God had granted he should prosper in all things, but chiefly in his wars against the infidel dogs who were troubling all Spain.

As the mists drew upward, Quentin could see about half a mile distant in front, a line of French cavalry videttes, each sitting motionless in his saddle, and both horse and rider looking like one huge and mis-shapen figure, as the scarlet cloak of the latter was spread over the crupper of his charger behind him.

While gazing steadily and with deep interest at the enemy, he was somewhat surprised to see two French dragoons suddenly ride from their own lines straight along the road towards his post.

That they were deserters—his first idea—was impossible, as they rode leisurely and were not fired on by their picquets. By their light green uniforms and brass helmets with flowing plumes he soon saw that they were *Chasseurs à Cheval*, and that one, who rode a few paces in front of the other, was an officer, with a white handkerchief tied as an extempore flag of truce to the point of his sabre.

Monkton, and the main body of the picquet, were rather beyond hail, and for a minute Quentin was irresolute what to do ; but before he could decide upon anything, the officer came fairly up to him, and checking his horse on the bit, said in tolerable English—

“ Monsieur le soldat, we have come hither on an errand of mercy. An old and valued officer of

our corps is sinking under the fatigue of last night and the suffering incident to an old wound, so we have ridden over to see if there is not at least one brave and generous man among you, who will give us a mouthful of eau-de-vie or any other spirit to keep him alive ; for though our surgeons order this, *sangdieu*, we haven't a drop in the whole brigade."

The interchange of many civilities, wine, biscuits, tobacco, and newspapers, frequently took place between our outposts and the French during the Peninsular wars. To such a length was this eventually carried, that they frequently went over to smoke at each other's watchfires ; but a very stringent order of the Duke of Wellington put a stop to these visits.

Before the speaker had concluded his singular request, Quentin had time to recognise in him the French lieutenant whom he had so signally befriended at Herreruela.

"Monsieur de Ribeaupierre," said he, "don't you remember me?"

"*Parbleu !* yes—this is fortunate, my friend," said the other, grasping Quentin's hand ; "I am glad to see you again, but not with the musket still—what ! no promotion yet?"

"I am still but a volunteer."

"Ah—you should serve the emperor !"

"And then, we have not yet fought a battle."

"Had you not fallen back so rapidly on our

advance from Valladolid and Tordesillas, we should have had the pleasure of capturing and escorting you all to France."

"Thanks for your good intentions."

"I still hope to see them carried out," said Ribeaupierre, laughing; "but here come some of your people," he added, waving his handkerchief, as Monkton, who had witnessed this interview, came hurrying forward, with his sergeant, and a section of the picquet with bayonets fixed.

Quentin rapidly acquainted Monkton with the object of the Frenchman's visit, adding—

"He is Ribeaupierre, the French officer of whom I told you—son of the brigadier of the same name."

"Ah—indeed; then I have much pleasure in meeting him," said Monkton, as he and the officer saluted each other very courteously.

On inquiry being made, it was discovered that the sergeant of the picquet, Ewen Donaldson, alone had any brandy, so he readily poured the contents of his canteen into the flask of Ribeaupierre, who, after thanking him profusely, handed it to his orderly, saying—

"Paul, mon camarade, away with this for our patient; use your spurs, and I shall follow."

The dragoon galloped away. Ribeaupierre offered a five-franc piece to Donaldson, who being a gruff Scotsman, declined it so bluffly that the young officer coloured to the peak of his helmet.

"You will join me in a cigar then, mon

camarade?" said he, politely proffering his open cigar case. Then saluting Monkton again, he said, "Excuse me, monsieur l'officier, if, before returning, I speak a word or two in your presence with the friend to whom I owe my life—whom my good mother remembers every night in her prayers, for I told her of our adventures near Valencia."

"Your mother, monsieur? Is it possible that she is with the army at this season?"

"She is with the emperor's court at Madrid, and hopes to see you all set sail from Lisbon. By the way," added Ribeaupierre, with a smile of waggery, "your lively Spanish friend, Donna Isidora, will be quite consoled when I tell her that I have seen you—alive and well too! She thinks of you with remorse and tears, as one whom she had poisoned in mistake, she says. How came all that to pass? We sent a patrol to search the Villa de Maciera for you, but no trace of you could be found."

"Is she still in your hands?" asked Quentin, with an expression of interest.

"Yes, monsieur," replied the other, caressing his moustache.

"A prisoner?"

"*Peste!* What an idea!"

"I trust you—you have treated her well and kindly?"

"She shall answer for herself, some time hence."

"A prisoner ! Poor Isidora ! She will be quite inconsolable."

"Inconsolable ? Mom ami, you forget in whose charming society she is ! We fellows of the 24th Chasseurs are unrivalled in conversational powers and the general art of pleasing. She spoke of you very often—thought you a very nice fellow—but so quiet—so *triste* !"

Quentin was glad that Monkton, whom he did not wish to hear all this, had gradually gone beyond earshot.

"And she—she——" he was beginning with emotions of annoyance and mortification.

"Be assured that she became quite consoled among the 24th, and now, as Madame Jules de Marbœuf, (for my comrade Jules took her off my hands), she has learned to think that we Frenchmen are not such bad fellows, after all."

"This is indeed news !" exclaimed Quentin ; "Isidora married—married, and to a Frenchman !"

"Ah—la belle tigresse is quite tamed now ; but I must begone. *Ouf—peste—tonnerre de Dieu* ! what a night we have had, monsieur," he added to Monkton, who again approached. "I have been so soaked that I felt as if the rain was filtering through the marrow of my bones. If you effect your junction with M. le Général Moore, I suppose we shall have the little variety of a general action."



"It is extremely probable," replied Monkton, smiling at the French officer's free and easy manner.

"That will indeed be gay—we are so anxious to measure swords with your cavalry. Do you know that General Foy, in one of his despatches, attributes your accidental victories——"

"*Accidental?*"

"That is the word, my friends——"

"For Roleia and Vimiera—eh?"

"Yes, for anything you like—Trafalgar and the Nile, if you please."

"Well, and Foy attributes them——"

"To two great elements you Anglais possess."

"Powder and pluck?"

"No—rum and ros-bif—ha, ha! *Au revoir*—we shall meet again," and putting spurs to his horse, Ribeaupierre, keeping his white handkerchief still displayed, rode across to his own lines, turning, however, repeatedly to kiss his hand, as his horse caracoled along.

Relieved from his post, Quentin rejoined the main body of the picquet in the grove of trees, where he remained apart from the men and full of thought; for though his self-esteem was somewhat piqued on learning that Isidora had so easily forgot him, he was greatly pleased to hear of her safety, and hoped that the circumstance, when known, would relieve him from the hostility of Baltasar and his ragamuffins, of whom he not

unnaturally had a constant dread. These ideas were mingled with something of amusement—that the brother-in-law of Baltasar, the most ferocious of Spanish patriots, should be a Frenchman !

Just as the picquets rejoined their regiments, prior to the whole division moving from Avila, Rowland Askerne called Quentin aside, and, with a face expressive of extreme concern, said—

“ I wish to speak particularly with you, Quentin—there is evidently something most unpleasant on the tapis.”

“ Regarding what—or who ?”

“ You, my friend.”

“ Me—how—in what way ?” asked Quentin.

“ Baltasar de Saldos, the guerilla, who has been so long in the rear, wounded, has now joined the division, and has been at the quarters of Sir John Hope in the Bishop’s palace.”

“ Surely, that matters nothing to me,” said Quentin, with growing anger and alarm.

“ Listen. I was in the street, speaking with the colonel, when the general, who was bowing out the formidable guerilla, beckoned him, and on their meeting I heard him say—

“ ‘ The information just given me, Colonel Crawford, by the guerilla, fully corroborates the character you gave me at Portalegre of that young fellow—what is his name ?’

“ ‘ Kennedy.’

“ ‘ Ah, yes ; you remember ?’

“ ‘ Yes, Sir John,’ replied the colonel, turning rather pale, I thought, as he glanced towards me.

“ ‘ But I have spoken with Major Middleton of yours, and unlike you, he gives him the very highest character. How am I to reconcile these discrepancies?’

“ Crawford then mumbled I know not what; but it was something about a previous knowledge of you—of old contumacy and insolence unknown to others; then I turned away, as it was alike impossible and improper to listen.”

These tidings filled Quentin’s breast with rage, alarm, and intense mortification. Here was a secret enmity against which there was no contending, bringing with it accusations of which he knew neither the nature nor the name.

One moment he felt inclined to rush into the presence of the general, and boldly demand to know of what his hostile colonel had accused him; and then there was De Saldos too! But in approaching Sir John Hope, he remembered that the proper mode could only be in writing, the letter being transmitted by the captain of the company to which he was attached, under cover to Cosmo, his particular enemy (who might then forward it with such comments as he chose), for such is the rule and etiquette of the service.

Before he could resolve on what was to be done, while fretting and chafing in his billet, and just as the bugles were sounding the warning for

the march, the old sergeant-major, Norman Calder, entered, accompanied by two soldiers of the light company, with their bayonets fixed.

The faces of his three visitors expressed considerable compunction, for our young volunteer, as we have said elsewhere, was a favourite with the whole corps.

“Mr. Kennedy,” said Calder, “I have come on a sorrowful errand to you; but I only obey the orders given to me by my superior officers.”

“And these orders are, sir?” demanded Quentin, furiously.

“To disarm you and march you a close prisoner with the quarter-guard.”

“For what reason?” asked Quentin, in a faint voice.

“I dinna ken, sir—I have only Colonel Crawford’s orders.”

“Of what am I accused?”

“That is more than I can say, sir; but if you are innocent you have nothing to fear. Take courage and set a stout heart to a steep brae, as we say at home, and you may turn the flanks of fortune yet,” added the worthy old non-commissioned officer, patting Quentin on the shoulder, for he saw that this open and public, and most unmerited humiliation before the entire division, cut him to the soul, and crushed all his spirit for the time.

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The division marched about sunrise, and Quentin, instead of being as usual with the grenadiers of the gallant Borderers, enjoying the society of Askerne and other officers, found himself trudging with the quarter-guard, a special prisoner, and kept apart from all others under a small escort, that marched on each side of him with muskets loaded and bayonets fixed ; for not being a commissioned officer, there could be no other arrest for him than a close one.

And thus, with a heavy—heavy heart, full almost to bursting with mortification and grief, ignorant of the accusations against him and of what was to be his fate, he marched with the division towards the ancient city of Alva on the Tormes, which they entered on the evening of the 4th December, and there, as they were to halt for seven days, Quentin was informed by Lieutenant Buckle that he was to be tried by a general court-martial.

He felt that all, indeed, was over with him now !

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE PRISONER.

"I would my weary course were o'er,  
Yet scarce can look for end save this,  
To dash to pieces on the shore,  
Or founder in the dark abyss.  
Fond thoughts, sweet hopes ! oh, far more blest  
My bosom had it never known  
Your presence, since in vain possest,  
To lose you while you seemed my own."

RODRIGUEZ LOBO.

HE rapidly learned that the court-martial was in the garrison orders to assemble on the 5th instant, and that charges of the most serious nature, involving, perhaps, the terrible penalty of—death, were to be brought against him !

What sudden mystery — what inexplicable horror was this ?

On the night he entered Alva he was relieved from the humiliation of an armed escort or guard by the influence of Askerne and Warriston, who both bound themselves by their parole of honour for his appearance whenever required. He was thus at liberty to go about the town, but he cared not to avail himself of it, and remained in his quarters.



The evening of the 4th of December was dull and gloomy. Setting amid saffron haze and shorn of all his beams, the lurid sun looming large and crimson like a wondrous globe, shed a steady light along the waters of the Tormes, a deep stream, which there rolls under a high and ancient bridge, that was afterwards blown up when the British retreated from Burgos.

An old Moorish wall surrounds Alva, which stands on the slope of a hill, and there, above its flat-terraced mansions, rises the great palace of the powerful Dukes of Alva and Berwick, where Ferdinand Alvarez of Toledo, the terror of the Low Countries and the institutor of "the Court of Blood," first saw the light. In an angle of the Moorish rampart, then crumbling in ruins, stands a high round tower of considerable strength and antiquity. Herein was posted the quarter-guard of the 1st Brigade, and in an upper chamber Quentin had his billet, and there he sat alone, after the day's march, left to his own reflections, and these were mournful and gloomy enough.

The aspect of this chamber was little calculated to raise his drooping spirit. Almost destitute of furniture, it was built of massive stone, vaulted, and had three narrow windows, the sides and horse-shoe arches of which were covered with elaborate zigzag Moorish ornaments, arabesques, and uncouth inscriptions, which, though he knew

it not, were texts and quotations from the Koran in Arabic. These had probably been gilded and gaudily coloured once, but now were simply coated with mouldy whitewash. One of these windows opened to the hill on the slope of which stands Alva, and afforded a view of its tiled and terraced roofs, all drenched by the recent rain. Another faced the mountains of Leon, and the third showed the narrow gorge through which the red and swollen Tormes lay rolling under the bridge; beyond which, on an eminence, were posted a brigade of field guns and a cavalry picquet; the horses were linked together, and the troops cloaked.

All looked wet and dreary, dull and mournful, and as the December sun went down beyond the dark and purple hills where Salamanca lies, the pipers of the 92nd played "Lochaber no more," their evening retreat, and this air, so sad, so slow and wailing, as they marched along the old Moorish wall, affected Quentin so deeply that he covered his face with his hands and wept.

What would that fine old soldier, courtier, and cavalier, the mirror of old-fashioned courage and honour, Lord Rohallion, say or think, when he heard of his disgrace? What would Lady Winifred—what the old quartermaster, John Girvan? and what would the emotions of Flora Warrender be?

Whether the charges against him were false

or true—proved or refuted—she at least would be lost to him for ever, for his career was closed ere it was well begun, and he felt that no other road in life lay open to him. He felt too, instinctively, that Baltasar de Saldos and his sister Donna Isidora were in some manner the secret source of the present evil turn in his fortune; but how or in what fashion he was yet to learn.

The phrase, that the charges involved death or such *other* punishment as a court-martial might award, was ever before him.

The vagueness of the latter recourse, rather than the terror of the first, cut him to the heart, as all the penalties inflicted by such a court are severe and disgraceful.

Cosmo, he heard, had suggested that he should be handed over to the tender mercies of the Spanish civil authorities; but Sir John Hope insisted that the charges were such as only a military court could take cognizance of; so what on earth were they? Unconscious alike of a mistake or crime, oh, how he longed for the time of trial!

As the darkness of the sombre eve crept on, its gloom was singularly in unison with his own sombre thoughts.

Bright visions had faded away and airy bubbles burst. Chateaux en Espagne were no longer tenable now! How many gorgeous day-dreams of glory and honour, of rank and fame, of position

in society attained by worth and merit, were now dissolved in air ! His naturally warm, generous, and kindly heart had become seared, callous, and misanthropical. Experience and the world had tried their worst upon him, and thus, for a time, a mere boy in years became a bitter-hearted man, for a day dawn of a glorious ambition seemed to be sinking prematurely into a black and stormy night.

He had seen so many new places and met such a variety of strangers ; he had been involved in so many episodes, and had experienced so much by land and sea, and, within a very few months, so much seemed to have happened, that a dreamy dubiety appeared to obscure the past ; and thus his former monotonous existence at Rohallion—monotonous as compared with the stir of war—came only at times with clearness, as it were in gleams and flashes of thought and memory. He had nothing tangible about him—not even a lock of Flora's hair—to convince him of past realities, or that he had ever been elsewhere than with the 25th ; and yet out of this chaos Flora's face and figure, her eyes and expression of feature, her identity, stood strongly forth. Oh ! there was neither obscurity nor indistinctness there !

And now, amid his sorrow, he felt a keen longing to write to her, under cover to John Girvan ; but then, he reflected, was such a course honourable in him or deserved by Lord and Lady Rohallion, who hoped to hail her one day as their

daughter-in-law? And what mattered her regard for him now—now, with the heavy doom of a court-martial hanging over his head! And yet, if even death were to be his fate, he felt that he would die all the more happily with the knowledge and surety that Flora still loved him.

Deep, deep indeed were his occasional bursts of bitterness at Cosmo; but when he remembered that Cosmo's mother had also been a mother to himself—when all the memory of her love for him, her early kindness, her caresses, her kisses on his infant brow, her increasing tenderness—came rushing back upon him, his heart flew to his head, and Quentin felt that even yet he could almost forgive all the studied wrong and injustice the narrow spirit and furious jealousy of her son now made him suffer. But how were the members of the regiment or of the division to understand all this!

Amid the reverie in which he had been indulging in the dark, the door of the upper chamber of the old tower opened, and two officers, in long regimental cloaks, entered, accompanied by a soldier with a parcel.

"Well, Quentin, old fellow—how goes it?" said Monkton's cheerful voice.

"Cheer up, my boy," added Askerne; "before this time to-morrow we shall have known the worst, and it will be past. We have brought you a bottle of capital wine. It is a present from Ramon



Campillo, the jolly muleteer, who came in after the division, and leaves again, for the French lines, I fear."

"A sly dog, who butters his bread on both sides, likely," said Monkton; "my man has brought you a fowl and a loaf, so we shall make a little supper together."

"Here, boy, drink," said Askerne, when the soldier lighted a candle, and they all looked with commiseration upon Quentin's pale cheek and bloodshot eyes; "I insist upon it—you seem ill and weary."

He could perceive that both Askerne and Monkton looked grave, earnest, and anxious, for they knew more of the charges against him than they cared to tell.

"At what hour does the court assemble to-morrow?" he asked.

"Ten, Kennedy."

"Who is the president?"

"Colonel Colquhoun Grant, of the King's Light Dragoons—a hussar corps."

"Where does it meet?" asked Quentin, wearily.

"In one of the rooms of the Alva Palace. Now we cannot stay above ten minutes, Quentin. We are both in orders for the court, which of course is a mixed one, and this visit, if known, might cost us our commissions perhaps; but I know Monkton's servant to be a sure fellow."

"Sure, sir," repeated the soldier, "I should



think so ! It was to *my* poor wife and child that Mr. Kennedy—the Lord reward him for it!—gave his blanket on the night we bivouacked at the Escorial,” added the man, in a broken voice ; “ the night I lost them both—never to see them again.”

Askerne now asked Quentin many questions concerning his recent wanderings ; the answers to some of these he jotted down in his note-book ; and he gave much good advice for his guidance on the morrow, adding, with a sigh of annoyance, that he feared there was a deep scheme formed against him, and that, as several outrages had been committed by our retreating troops, it was not improbable that he might be sacrificed to soothe the ruffled feelings of the Spaniards.

“ What leads you to think so ? ” asked Quentin.

“ This subpœna, which Monkton’s servant picked up in a wine-house and brought us,” replied Askerne, opening a letter and reading it, as follows :

“ Head-quarters, Alva-de-Tormes,  
December 4th.

“ SENOR PADRE,—A general court-martial having been appointed to be held here, for the trial of Mr. Quentin Kennedy, serving with the 25th Regiment, upon sundry charges exhibited against him ; and the said Mr. Kennedy having represented that your testimony will be very material in the investigation of some of the articles of

charge, and having requested that you may be officially summoned as a witness, I am to desire you, and you are hereby required, to give your attendance here to-morrow, at ten o'clock in the morning, at which time it is conceived your evidence will become necessary.

“ I have the honour to be, &c., &c.,

“ LLOYD CONYERS, Staff Captain,

“ Deputy Judge Advocate.

“ El Senor Padre Trevino.”

“ This is some trickery !” exclaimed Quentin ; “ Trevino is the ruffian of whom I have spoken more than once ; the man’s doubly my enemy. Well, well ! save myself, it matters little to any one what becomes of me,” he added bitterly. “ I have no kindred—not a relation that I know of in the wide world, and save yourselves, no friends now to regret me or to remember me, save *one* of whom I cannot speak. It is thus better as it is.”

“ How ?” asked Askerne, who grasped him firmly by the hand.

“ For if this false accusation, whatever it is, be proved against me, then none shall blush for my dishonour or sorrow for my fall. Fools may laugh and the wicked may jeer, but the death volley will close up my ears for ever. It may do more,” he added, in a broken voice ; “ it may be the means of revealing to me who was my mother, who my father, with the great secret of

eternity after all ; so, my dear Askerne, I am, you see, reckless of the future."

"Damme, Quentin, this will never do——" Monkton was beginning, when Askerne spoke.

"In this mingled mood of sullenness and resignation you will destroy all chance of defeating the machinations of your enemy, for such I—I—consider our colonel to be," said the captain of grenadiers, after a pause. "Buckle and I will prepare your declaration for to-morrow, and it shall be sent to you for revision and emendation soon after reveille ; but you must take courage—I insist upon it, for your own sake !"

"I do not lack it," replied Quentin, firmly.

"By courage, I do not mean an indifference that is the result of misanthropy, or a boldness that is gathered from despair. At your years, Quentin, either were unnatural," said Askerne, kindly.

"My brave lad," said Monkton, putting an arm round him as an elder brother might have done, "have you really no fear of—of death?"

"To say that I have not," replied Quentin, with quivering lip, "would be to state that which is false ; but I know death to be the ordinance of God—the fate of all mankind. It is but the end of the course of time—welcome only to such as are weary of their lives. I am not weary of mine, therefore I would indeed find it hard to die. I have always known that I must die, but

never considered where or how—how near or how distant the day of doom might be; but I do shrink with horror at the contemplation of dying with a disgrace upon me—a stigma which, though I am innocent, time may never remove.”

“I fear that we are but poor comforters, and that you are taking the very blackest view of matters,” said Askerne; “but be advised by me, and take courage—a resolute and modest bearing always wins respect. In the court to-morrow are friends who will not see you wronged, for every member there is alike a judge and a jurymen. Put your trust in Heaven and in your own innocence; sleep well if you can——”

“And be sure to take something by way of breakfast—a broiled bone and a glass of Valdepenas—you have a long and anxious day before you.”

“And so, till we meet again, good night—God bless you, my hearty!”

They shook him warmly by the hand, and retired.

He heard their footsteps descending the stone steps of the old tower (erst trod by the feet of many a turbaned Moor and steel-clad crusader), and then dying away in distance; but soothed and relieved in mind by a visit performed at such risk by his friends, and hoping much—he knew not what—from the notes made by Rowland Askerne, Quentin lay down on his pallet and strove

to sleep, amid a silence broken only by the beating of his own heart, and the rush of the Tormes in its deep and rocky bed.

"*They* at least believe in me, and will not desert me!" he repeated to himself again and again.

But, the brave boyish spirit and hope—the enthusiastic desire to achieve something great and good, no matter what, by land or sea, by flood or field—a glorious deed that present men should vaunt, and those of future times would speak of—where were that hope and spirit *now*?

## CHAPTER X.

## THE COURT-MARTIAL.

“ Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,  
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.  
Yet not for power, (power of herself  
Would come uncall'd for,) but to live by law,  
Acting the law we live by without fear ;  
And because right is right, to follow right  
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.”

TENNYSON.

THE court-martial assembled in a large and magnificent apartment of the Alva palace or castle, which stands in the centre of the town. It is in a good state of preservation, and the chamber usually occupied by the terrible duke, with all its ancient furniture, still remains there in its original state.

On the walls of the great apartment selected for the court hung the armour of the successive princes of the house of Toledo from a very remote period—indeed, from the mail shirts that had resisted the Moorish scimitars down to the steel caps and jacks of the war of the Spanish succession ; and many of the breast-plates were emblazoned with the armorial bearings and trophies of those warlike dukes who boast of their descent from the



Paleologi Emperors of the East, and who were first ennobled as peers of Leon by Alphonso VI., or the Brave, of Castile, in 1085.

As Quentin approached the great embattled door of this stately mansion, many soldiers of the regiment were crowding about it, and all these muttered their good wishes ; many a hard but honest hand was held out to him, and many a forage-cap waved in silence, evincing emotions of good-will that stirred his heart with gratitude, and gave him new courage as he entered the court, attended by the provost-marshal.

He certainly looked wan and ill ; traces yet remained of his recent illness at the Villa de Maciera ; to these were added anxiety, lack of proper food and sleep, with the toil and exposure incident to the campaign, all of which served to give him interest in the eyes of many, for the court was crowded by spectators, chiefly officers of nearly every regiment in the division, and a few Spanish citizens and priests of Alva.

His young face appeared sorrow-struck in feature, and many read there, in the thoughtful brow, the quivering lip, and the sad but restless eye, indications of a proud but suffering spirit. Save these, and an occasional unconscious twitching of the hands, Quentin, though awed by the presence, and the hapless and novel predicament in which he found himself, was calm and collected in appearance.

He was simply clad in his unlaced and plain red coat, without a belt or accoutrement of any kind, to indicate that he was a prisoner ; and he was accommodated with a chair and separate table, on which lay writing materials, but these he had not the slightest intention of using.

At the head of a long table of formidable aspect, whereon lay a Bible and the "Articles of War," and which was littered with pens, paper, letters, &c., sat the president of the court, Colonel Colquhoun Grant, in the gorgeous uniform of the 15th Hussars, blue faced with red, and the breast a mass of silver embroidery that might have turned a sword-cut. He wore the Order of Merit, given to every officer of his regiment by the Emperor of Germany fourteen years before, for their unexampled bravery in the affair of Villiers en Couche, a name still borne on the standard of the Hussars.

The other members, fourteen in number, belonged to different regiments ; but Quentin was truly glad to see among them the familiar faces of Askerne and two other captains of the Borderers. All were in full uniform, and were seated on the right and left of the president, according to their seniority in the army ; Captain Conyers, acting as judge-advocate, being placed at the foot of the court, which, by the showy uniform, large epaulettes of silver or gold, the crimson sashes, and, in four instances, tartan plaids, of the mem-

bers, had a very rich and striking appearance as the morning sunshine streamed along the stately room through six lofty and latticed windows.

A considerable bustle and treading of feet on the tessellated floor announced the entrance of the various witnesses, among whom Quentin recognised the tall figure of the Master of Rohallion, the sturdy paunch of worthy Major Middleton, the sun-burned faces of Buckle and others of the Borderers, together with a Dominican monk, in whom, notwithstanding his freshly-shaven chin, long robe, and knotted girdle, he recognised, with astonishment, Trevino! Other guerillas were present, but the most prominent was Don Baltasar.

The handsome but sallow visage of the latter was pale nearly as that of a corpse; his bloodless lips and white glistening teeth appeared ghastly beneath the coal-black and enormous moustaches that were twisted savagely up to each ear. His nostrils were contracting and dilating with wild, mad passion, and it was evident that nothing but the presence he stood in prevented him from rushing, sword in hand, on Quentin, and ending, there and then, the proceedings of the court and our story by immolating him on the spot.

Quite undeterred by his formidable aspect or excitement, some of the younger officers were seen to quiz Baltasar, whose costume, an em-

broidered black velvet jacket, with a pair of British flank-company wings, and other accessories, was sufficiently mock-heroic, fanciful, and absurd.

"Who acts as the prisoner's counsel or friend?" asked Colonel Grant, the president.

"I—Captain Warriston, 94th—Scots Brigade," said the full mellow voice of that officer, as he entered, fully accoutred with sword, sash, and gorget, and took his seat at the little table beside Quentin Kennedy, who, at the moment, felt his heart very full indeed.

Captain Conyers now read the order for assembling the court, and then the members, each with his ungloved right hand placed upon the open Bible, were sworn the usual oath, "to administer justice according to the rules and articles for the better government of his Majesty's forces, &c., without partiality, favour, or affection, &c.; and further, not to divulge the sentence of the court until approved of, or the vote or opinion of any member thereof, unless required to do so by a court of law."

This formula over, the judge advocate desired Quentin to stand while the charges against him were read; and to his utter bewilderment they ran thus, briefly, as we omit many dates and repetitions:—

"Mr. Quentin Kennedy, volunteer, serving with his Majesty's 25th Foot, accused in the

following instances of conduct unbecoming a gentleman and soldier :

“ *First* ; of rescuing by the strong hand a French officer and lawful prisoner of war from Don Baltasar de Saldos, in direct violation of the 51st clause of the 2nd section of the ‘Articles of War.’

“ *Second* ; of giving the rescued prisoner such intelligence as enabled the enemy, then cantoned in Valencia de Alcantara, to anticipate, by a combined attack, the junction about to be formed by the guerilla force of Don Baltasar with the division of the allied army under Lieutenant-General Sir John Hope, and thus causing the loss of five field-guns and many Spanish subjects.

“ *Third* ; of snaring away from the cantonment at Herreruella the sister of Don Baltasar de Saldos, who has not since been heard of, her fate being thus involved in mystery, or worse, and thereby the prisoner contravened the order issued by Sir John Moore, urging the conciliation of the Spanish people on the army entering Castile.

“ *Fourth* ; of assaulting in the town of Merida, to the effusion of blood, the Reverend Padre Trevino, lately a Dominican monk of Salamanca, and now chaplain to Don Baltasar de Saldos, in direct contravention of the 37th clause of the 2nd section of the ‘Articles of War,’ concerning any officer or soldier ‘who shall offer violence to a chaplain of the army or to *any other minister of God’s word.*’



“*Fifth*; of plundering an inhabitant to the extent of at least eighty gold moidores, part of which were found in his baggage and part given to the paymaster of his Majesty’s 25th Foot for transmission home.

“*Sixth*; for refusing or declining to take another despatch to Don Baltasar, from Montijo, and thereby showing a complicity with the enemy and dread of detection by the loyal party in Spain.”

So ended this farrago of words.

Aware that sooner or later the proceedings of the court-martial (which we can assure the reader made some noise at the time) would be read at Rohallion, Colonel Crawford had all the charges framed in the name of the general of division.

“Oh, Cosmo!” thought Quentin, “you aim not only at my life, but at my honour!”

“Well, ’pon my soul,” thought the Master, after he heard the list of charges read, “if the fellow gets over *all* these, I’ll say that, with a fair match, and equally weighted, he might run a race with the devil himself!”

Quentin pleaded *not guilty*.

The court was then cleared of the witnesses and the proceedings commenced.

With the regular detail of these we have no intention of afflicting the reader; suffice it, that the solemn and dreary writing down of every question and answer so lengthened them out



that they became a source of irritation and agony to one whose temperament was so sharp and impetuous as that of Quentin Kennedy, burning as he was with indignation at accusations so false and so unmerited, and some of which he had a difficulty in refuting ; and, we regret to add, that the form of procedure was then, as it is still, old-fashioned, cumbrous, loose, and tedious.

There was no regular legal counsel for the prisoner or for the prosecution either ; no cross-examination, save such as might emanate from some unusually sharp fellow, who kept himself awake, and affected to take notes, when in reality he was caricaturing Middleton's pigtail, Smith's paunch, and Brown's nose.

The witnesses were sometimes examined pell-mell, just as their names stood on the list ; their evidence, however, being carefully written down, to the end that it might be read over to them for after-thought or revision before the opinions of the court, as to guilt and sentence, were asked ; a formula that always begins with the *junior* member, the president having the casting vote.

Such was then, as it is now, the somewhat rambling, free and easy tenor of a general court-martial ; yet, with all its idiosyncrasies, it is ever a just and honourable tribunal, and such as no true soldier would ever wish to change for a civil one. Every member sworn is bound to give an opinion. In the French service a military offence

can be tried after the lapse of ten years; with us, the period is three.

Warriston objected to the competency of the court; but the president over-ruled his objection by stating that a Volunteer of the Line, like every other camp-follower, was amenable to the "Articles of War."

The transmission of the despatch to Don Baltasar was easily proved by Cosmo and others, and by the reply, which lay on the table.

Though handsome and soldierly in aspect and bearing, the Master of Rohallion could scarcely conceal a very decided *animus* in delivering his evidence. Brave and proud, he was yet weak enough and small enough in mind to *hate* Quentin Kennedy with that species of animosity which is always the most bitter, because it arises from a *sense* of unmerited wrong done to the weaker victim.

In answer to a question by the president:

"Of the prisoner's antecedents," said he, "I know very little—little at least that is good or honourable."

"Colonel Crawford, you will be so good as explain."

"He was received as an orphan, an outcast, I believe, into the house of my father, General Lord Rohallion, when I was serving with the Brigade of Guards. That house he deserted ungratefully and disappeared for a time, no trace

of him being discovered but a silver-mounted walking-stick, which I knew to be his, and which was found beside a murdered man, a vagrant or gipsy, in the vault of an old ruin called Kilhenzie. How it came there, I pretend not to say; but on searching the vault, whither my pointers led me, I picked up the stick, with marks of blood upon it, some days after the body had been taken away."

On hearing this cruel and artful speech, which contained so much of reality, Quentin almost started from his chair, his eyes flashing and his pale nether lip quivering with rage; but Warriston held him forcibly back.

"Prisoner," said the president, "do you know a place in Scotland called the castle of Kilhenzie?"

"I do not understand the meaning of this question," said Captain Warriston, rising impetuously, "and to it I object! It is not precise on the part of the prosecution, and discloses an intention of following up a line of examination of which neither the prisoner nor his *amici curiæ* have received due notice, and which, moreover, is not stated in the six charges before the court."

After a consultation, Colonel Grant replied:

"The line of examination in this instance, Captain Warriston, is to prove previous character; thus we find it quite relevant to question the prisoner concerning the episode referred to. It may bear very materially on *other* matters before

the court. Mr. Kennedy, do you know a place called Kilhenzie?"

"I do, sir," said Quentin, and for a moment there rushed upon his memory recollections of many a happy hour spent there with Flora Warrender, near its crumbling walls and giant dule-tree.

"Are you aware of any remarkable circumstance occurring there in which you were an actor?"

Poor Quentin's pallor now gave way to a flush of shame and honest anger; but he replied—

"Driven into the ruin by a torrent of rain, I found a dead body lying there among the straw; it filled me with alarm and dismay, so I hastened from the place."

"Leaving behind you a walking-stick?"

"Yes, sir; it would appear so."

"Covered with blood."

"Most likely," said Quentin, remembering the wound he had received from Cosmo's hand.

"All this, Colonel Grant, has nothing to do with the case," urged Warriston, firmly.

"It seems to cast grave doubts on the previous character and antecedents of the prisoner."

"It seems also to show the peculiar vindictiveness of the prosecution."

"You are unwise, Captain Warriston," said the president, severely.

"I am here as the friend of the prisoner."

“For what reason did you leave the castle of Rohallion?” asked the court.

Quentin gazed full at the Master with his eyes flashing so dangerously that this personage, fearing he might be driven to say something which might bring ridicule on him—though Quentin would rather have died than uttered Flora’s name there—begged that the first charge might be proceeded with.

Sworn across two drawn swords in the Spanish fashion, Baltasar, Trevino, and other guerillas, inspired by spite and hostility, related in succession how Quentin had rescued the French prisoner; how he had undertaken to conduct Donna Isidora in safety to Portalegre, a mere day’s ride; but had made away with her, on the road, in some manner unknown, as well as with a horse and mule, the property of her brother.

“A singular duenna to have charge of a young Spanish beauty—eh, Carysfort?” he heard a hussar say.

“By Jove, Villars, I wish it had been my luck—that’s all,” was the laughing reply.

Quentin wished the same with all his heart.

Then came details of the attack made on the guerillas by Ribeaupierre’s cavalry brigade. The charge of giving intelligence to the enemy was based on bare assumption, and was unsupported by a tittle of evidence.

Next followed the Padre Trevino, costumed for



the occasion and effect, a rare example of a wolf in sheep's clothing, who showed his wounded caput, and told, in a whining voice, the sorrowful story of his maltreatment at the aqueduct of Merida, whither he had gone to pray in solitude. The assault was proved beyond a doubt by the evidence of a certain Martin Sedillo, an ill-looking dog with one eye, formerly an alguazil of Salamanca and now a guerilla, who swore distinctly that he saw Quentin beat the padre down with the butt-end of his musket.

"You distinctly saw him strike the padre down?" repeated Colonel Grant.

"Si, senor presidente y senores oficiales," said the guerilla, bowing low.

"Wantonly?"

"Most wantonly, senores."

"Retire. Call the next witness on the list—private Allan Grange, 25th Foot."

To the Borderer, on his entrance, the previous questions were repeated by the court.

"Yes, sir—I saw Mr. Kennedy strike down the guerilla (who was not then habited like a friar) with his clubbed musket, but only in time to save his life from *this dagger*, which I took from the hand of his reverence."

As he spoke, Allan Grange handed a knife of very ugly aspect to the president, who saw the name *Trevino* burned, by a hot iron, on the haft.

"Allan Grange, were you ever tried by a court-



martial?" asked the judge advocate, looking among his memoranda for one furnished by Colonel Crawford.

"Yes, sir," faltered the soldier, growing red and pale by turns.

"And were reduced to the ranks, at Colchester?"

"Yes, sir," he replied, sadly.

"And you were sentenced to be flogged—three hundred lashes, I think, by the Defaulter's Book?"

"A sentence kindly remitted by Major Middleton," said Grange, proudly.

"There, this will do—you may go," said Colonel Grant; and then some of the members smiled and looked at each other, as much as to say, "we see how much *your* evidence is worth."

Quentin knew that Donna Isidora was in the French camp; but when Warriston mentioned this to be the case, the only witness called to prove it, Lieutenant Monkton, was unable to repeat what Ribeaupierre said, as he had been beyond hearing at that particular moment.

On the fifth charge, concerning the gold moirdores, Quentin thought himself bewitched when the one-eyed guerilla, Martin Sedillo, deliberately swore, with the drawn swords of two officers crossed under his bearded chin, "that he was plundered of them at Herreruella by the prisoner, whom he was ready to warrant as false as Galalon!"

"Who was he?" inquired Askerne, looking at his watch impatiently for the third time.

"Galalon betrayed the French army at Roncesvalles," said Colonel Grant; "as we say in Scotland, false as Menteith. It is a local phrase."

His refusal to bear another despatch to De Saldos was easily proved, and that circumstance seemed to corroborate much that had preceded it.

Matters were now looking gloomy indeed. Quentin became sick at heart; he drained his water-jug, yet his lips grew parched and dry; he felt the toils closing around him, and already, in fancy, he heard the president passing the terrible sentence of death!

The bitter conviction came home to his soul, that hate and wiles, against which it was in vain for innocence to contend, were triumphing over him; and that even if pardoned, the memory that he had been arraigned, and on *such* cruel charges, would live!

Shame for unmerited reproach and unavailing sorrow for a lost youth—a blighted, it might be, a long life taken away, and perhaps by a shameful death—were some of the deep, the bitter, and stinging emotions felt on this day by poor Quentin Kennedy.

While that court-martial lasted he lived a lifetime in every hour of it!

His declaration or defence, read by Warriston,

was simply a recapitulation of some of the leading features of our narrative, which he had no means of substantiating; the mass of evidence against him was summed up, but was too strong in some points to be easily disposed of. His youth and inexperience were dwelt upon, but it seemed without much avail. Neither did the warm manner in which Major Middleton, Buckle, Sergeant-major Calder and others, bore testimony to his spotless character, seem to find much weight. To satisfy the Spaniards, a victim was wanted, and here was one ready made to hand.

It was now nearly four o'clock, and the Court was about to be cleared for the consideration of the opinion and sentence, when the sharp and well-known twang of a French cavalry trumpet rang in the court before the palace, and the tramping of horses was heard.

"Thank God!" muttered Askerne (who had frequently consulted his watch) as he exchanged a rapid glance with Monkton; "that muleteer has served us well!"

At that moment of terrible expectation an officer of the 7th Hussars entered hastily, and presented a note to the judge advocate.

"What interruption is this, Captain Conyers?" asked Colonel Grant, sternly.

"An officer from the French lines, come in under a flag of truce, requests to be examined by the Court for the defence," replied Conyers.

Every face present expressed extreme astonishment.

“What is his name?” asked the president.

“Eugene de Ribeaupierre—sous-lieutenant of the 24th Chasseurs à Cheval,” said Conyers, consulting an embossed calling-card.

“Is it he whose name occurs so frequently in the declaration of the prisoner?”

“Most probably, sir.”

“Admit him.”

The clank of a sabre and the jingle of steel spurs were heard, and then Eugene de Ribeaupierre, looking handsome and gay, but flushed after a long ride from Fonteveros, entered, helmet in hand, and bowed low to the Court and all who were present.

“Ha, mon ami!” said he, shaking Quentin’s hand with warmth, “I am come in time, I hope; the proceedings are not yet closed, monsieur?” he asked anxiously of the president.

“No—but how did *you* come to hear of them?” was the suspicious question.

“From Ramon Campillo, a muleteer of Miranda del Ebro; the same person who conveyed M. Kennedy from the Villa de Maciera to Portalegre, and who was passing through our camp this morning. He came expressly to my tent to tell me all about it, and that charges were to be made which I alone could refute. I reported the affair to my father, the General, who generously gave me

leave to come here, with an escort—so I have come, messieurs, to be sworn and examined.”

“Askerne,” whispered Monkton, “you are a rare fellow!”

“How, Willie?”

“Damme, by your foresight we shall yet baffle Crawford, De Saldos, Trevino and Co.!”

“Hush, hush! You are rash.”

It is almost needless to describe how the young French officer, after being duly sworn by the judge advocate, corroborated in every particular the statement made in Quentin's declaration—statements of which he could have had no previous cognisance, save as an actor in the episodes referred to. He described how Quentin had saved his life from a deliberate attempt at assassination on the part of De Saldos, and became strongly excited on referring to the infamous massacre of the prisoners by Trevino. He asserted that the moidores were taken by himself from the holsters of Raoul, a dead corporal of his troop, who found them amid the plunder of Coimbra. He asserted, on his oath and honour as an officer and chevalier of the Legion of Honour, that the movement made by the troops of his father, collaterally with those of General Hope and the guerillas of Bal-tasar, was *not* consequent to any information given him by the prisoner, but had been resolved on long before, as a printed order of the emperor,

which he had the honour to lay on the table, would amply testify !

As for Donna Isidora, he freely and laughingly acknowledged that he had carried her away from the villa, and that she was now Madame de Marbœuf, wife of his friend Jules de Marbœuf, colonel of the 24th, as the Padre Florez, who, ignorant of that auspicious event, had come to effect her release from the French camp, could now substantiate, as he was now without the court, and ready to appear.

The long, thin figure of the padre, wearing his flowing soutan and shovel hat, next appeared to corroborate all this, and also to state the sickly condition in which he handed over Quentin to the muleteers at the Villa de Maciera.

“ Every link is thus supplied beyond a doubt ! ” exclaimed Colonel Grant.

Quentin was acquitted amid a burst of applause that found an echo in the hearty hurrah given by the King’s Own Borderers in the palace square without.

“ And now, monsieur, ” said Ribeaupierre, presenting Quentin with a valuable diamond ring, “ accept this as a present from madame my mother, who drew it from her finger as I left the camp, with the request that you will wear it for her sake, and in memory of the day on which you saved my life from that barbarous Spaniard among the mountains of Herreruela. ”



Within an hour after rendering service so valuable, and indeed so priceless, and after having some luncheon with Askerne, Grant, Conyers, and other officers who composed the court, the gallant and generous Ribeaupierre had mounted and ridden from Alva de Tormes, attended by a strong escort, in front of which rode a Polish lancer, with a white handkerchief in token of truce streaming from the head of his lance; and so ended—like a dream to Quentin—this episode, this chivalric intervention, which was dictated by a noble spirit worthy of the knightly days of the Chevalier Bayard, or of Bertrand du Guesclin.

## CHAPTER XI.

## LOVE ME.

“ You do return me back on memory’s path  
To dear remembered scenes. Old Scotland’s scenes !  
It is a glorious land ! I long to roam,  
Doubly a lover, ’mong its wildest charms ;  
Its glens, its rocky coast, its towering cliffs  
Come o’er me like a dream of infancy,  
Startling the soul to momentary rapture ;  
It is the voice of home ! ” — DANIEL.

Two or three days passed before Quentin quite recovered his equanimity, or felt assured of his safety, and then as the whole affair of the court-martial seemed like a night-mare, he might have deemed it all a dream, but for the occasional comments and congratulations of his friends, and for the splendid gift of Madame de Ribeaupierre, which he prized greatly for its whole history, and which he longed greatly to place on one of Flora Warrender’s tiny fingers.

Three days after the sitting of the court, tidings came to Alva that Baltasar de Saldos and his guerilla force had suffered a sharp repulse with great loss by the French, whose post at Fonteveras they had attacked with unexampled

fury and blind rashness—both perhaps inspired by Donna Isidora's defection from her country's cause—and that in the confused retreat upon Hope's picquets, the luckless Baltasar had been shot dead by one of the Westphalian Light Horse.

We are not ashamed to say that Quentin on hearing this from Major Middleton, felt a species of relief, self-preservation being one of the first laws of nature, and he never could have felt himself perfectly safe in Spain while Baltasar de Saldos trod its soil.

Reflection on all the past served but to embitter the disgust and wrath with which he viewed the bearing of Cosmo Crawford at the recent trial, his whole connexion with it, and the terrible and hopeless malevolence he exhibited in reference to the episode at Kilhenzie, an affair which there was some difficulty in explaining, without referring to other and irrelevant matters ; so Quentin burned with impatient eagerness for a general engagement with the French, for anything that would serve to blot out the recollection of his late unmerited humiliation ; but he never thought of the enemy now without the face, figure, and voice of his friend Ribeaupierre rising upbraidingly before him.

Cosmo could have dismissed Quentin from the regiment, with or without cause, a colonel being himself sole judge of the expediency of so getting rid of a volunteer ; but he was ashamed that his

own family should hear of an act so petty. The onus of the futile court-martial fell on the general of division, and there were many chances against Quentin ever relating its secret history at Rohal-lion, as ere long bullets would be flying thick as winter hail.

Amid that confidence which is inspired by a borrachio-skin of good Valdepenas, varied by stiff brandy-and-water, Quentin, so far as he deemed necessary or right, made "a clean breast of it" to his friends and comrades, and detailed anew his adventures on the road from Herrerucla and at the Villa de Maciera. Though he was complimented by Warriston and Askerne, whose praise was of value, there were not a few, such as Monkton, Colville, Ensigns Colyear, Boyle and others, who laughed immoderately, and voted him "a downright spoon"—wishing "such jolly good-luck had been theirs as to have a dazzling Castilian chucking herself at their heads."

"Yes, damme," said Monkton, "I should have had another story to tell; though, certainly, Kennedy, your Dulcinea did not 'let concealment like a worm i' the bud'—how does the quotation end? Now, Pimple, are you going to keep that blessed borrachio-skin all night? Why, man, you have squeezed it till it has become like a half-empty bagpipe."

Elsewhere we have mentioned that, after reading the famous newspaper paragraph which made

such a commotion among the secluded household at Rohallion, the quartermaster offered to write to Quentin, and that Flora gave him a tiny note to enclose in his letter.

So it was on this night, when returning from Monkton's billet to his own, with a head none of the clearest, after talking a vast deal, smoking cigars and drinking the country wine, that Quentin was startled—completely sobered, in fact—by his servant placing in his hand a letter, and saying briefly that “the mail had come up that evening from the rear,” which meant from Lisbon.

This letter was covered by such a multitude of post-marks that some time elapsed before Quentin—all unused to receive such documents—could bring himself to examine the contents; nor, in his mute astonishment, did he do so, until he had fully deciphered the address, which was in old John Girvan's hand, and the seal, an antiquated button of the 25th Foot, with the number, of course, reversed.

Every word seemed like *a voice from home*, and all the past—faces, forms, scenes, and places, came like a living and moving panorama on his memory.

Then, almost giddy with delight, a heart tremulous with anxiety, and eyes that grew moist—so moist, indeed, that for some seconds he could see no more than that the letter was dated more than a month back, Quentin was striving to read the

square, old-fashioned writing of his early friend, when something dropped from between the pages—a tiny note, sealed by blue wax—the crest a hare *sejant*, the cognisance of the Warrenders.

Excited anew, he opened this with extreme care but tremulous haste. It was a single sheet of note-paper, on which two words were written, in a hand he knew right well—*From Flora*—and in it was a valuable ring, studded with precious stones.

We are compelled to admit that Quentin kissed the words and the ring some dozen times or so before he put the paper containing the former next his heart, in the most approved manner of all lovers, and the circlet on his finger, where he continued to admire it from time to time, while deciphering the long and somewhat prosy, but kind letter of his worthy old friend, who evidently knew nothing about the unlucky court-martial being on the tapis when he wrote it, Lord Rohallion's startling reply from the Horse Guards not having then arrived.

“MY DEAR QUENTIN,—And so by God's providence, through the humble medium of a stray newspaper, we have found you at last! Ye rash and ungrateful callant to leave us all in such a fashion, and well-nigh unto demented lest you had come to skaith or evil. I'll never forget the night the news first came to Rohallion that you



had been found. You mind o' my auld Flanders greybeard—the Roman amphora, as the dominie calls it—he and I, wi' Spillsby and auld Jack Andrews, emptied it to the last drop, drinking your health, pouring forth libations in your honour, as Symon Skail hath it, and singing 'Should auld acquaintance be forgot' as we have never sung it since Robbie Burns left Mossiel.

“And so, Quentin, my lad, ye have gone forth even as I went, nigh half a century ago, and have joined the glorious old 25th too! The Lord's blessing be on the old number, wherever it be—even on the head of a beer barrel! I joined the Borderers with little more than my father's benediction on my head, and, what served me better, one of my mother's pease-bannocks in my pouch. After Minden I came home a corporal, and proud I am to say, that I was the poor wayworn soldier-lad whom Burns saw passing the inn at Brown-hill, and whom he invited to share his supper on the night he wrote his song—

“When wild war's deadly blast had blawn.”

But ere long, by putting my trust in Providence (and a gude deal in pipeclay), I became, as I am now, and hope you one day shall be, a commissioned officer!

“As for Cosmo the Master, I fear me you'll find him a harsh and severe colonel. He was aye a dour laddie, and a heartbreak to his mother.

“The Lord and the Lady Rohallion, and a'

body here, down to the running footman, send you their best remembrances. Miss Flora, of Ardgour, writes for herself, and what her note contains is no business of *mine*. Yesterday I caught her looking at the map of Spain in the library, and then she turned to that of Europe.

“ ‘Girvanmains, it seems only the length of a finger from here to Spain,’ said she, placing a bonnie white hand on the map, ‘and yet it is so far—so *very* far away!’

“ She often comes into my snuggerly and speaks of you, the puir lassie, with her eyes and heart full. She has taken your terrier as her peculiar care, and sees that the gamekeeper has your guns and fishing-tackle always in order, for she looks forward, doubtless, to a time when you will need them all again.

“ She is as handsome and high-spirited as ever! Young Ferny of Fernwoodlee, dangles pretty closely about her now, and village gossips say they may make a good match, as his lands march with the haughs of Ardgour. If they do, I am sure *you* wont care much about it now, for active service rubs all soft nonsense out of a young fellow’s head, just as his waistbelt rubs his coat bare. (How little the worthy quartermaster, as he blundered on, conceived that he was now sticking pins and needles into poor Quentin by this incidental communication about the young fox-hunting laird of Fernwoodlee!)

“A long war is before us, Quentin, lad, and you’re certain to rise in the service and be spoken about in future times, as Wolfe and Abercrombie are now. Maybe I’ll not live to see the day—at my years it is not likely, but I know that it *will* happen for all that, when the grass is growing green above me in the auld kirkyard up the glen.

“The dominie—he is sitting opposite me brewing his toddy at this moment—hopes that you have not fallen into the vile habit of uttering oaths—a habit peculiar to gentlemen of our army ever since it ‘swore so terribly in Flanders.’ He bids me say that ‘from a common custom of swearing, according to Hierocles (some Roman loon, I warrant) men easily slide into falsity; therefore do not use to swear.’ He also hopes that you are not becoming contaminated in those realms of the Pope, who, though he founded all the bishoprics and most of the universities of Christendom, enjoyeth the evil repute of being little better than a Pagan and idolater among us here in Carrick. Moreover, ye are in an especial manner to avoid the snares of the female sex, and remember the mischief that was wrought by a light limmer named Helen of Troy.

“From myself, dear Quentin, I say avoid all duellists, drunkards, gamblers, and fools; as a good old friend of mine—a brave soldier, too—saith in his book, ‘Provide for your soul, and God will provide for your honour. If your name be

forgot in the annals of time, it will make a noble figure in the muster-roll of eternity.'

"If you are short of the needful, I have still a few more golden shot in the locker, so fail not to draw on me through Greenwood and Cox, or your paymaster."

"I would give much, if I had it, to have one glimpse of the old corps again, though no one in it, I suppose, remembers old John Girvan now!"

"Are the bringers-up still dressed from the right flank by a flam on the drum? Does the colonel still use a speaking-trumpet? Is the point of war beaten now in honour of every new commission? Are the sergeants' pikes still stretchers for the wounded? Are pigtails always dressed straight by the back seam of the coat, and—but Lord! Lord! what am I asking? I clean forgot that the service is going to the devil, for the order that abolished the queues will be the ruin of it, from the Horse Guards to the Hottentot battalions! I can't fancy the 25th, like the Manx cats, with their tails cut off! In my time there would have been open mutiny if the atrocity had been attempted."

"Even the hair-powder is passing out of fashion now, unless a colonel happens to be powdered by time. Gentlemanly spirit will pass away too, I fear me, and the cautious time will come when a man will think *twice* before accepting an invitation to *go out* with a brother officer and breathe the

morning air, about reveillez, at ten paces, with a pair of saw-handled pops.

"In Rohallion's time the 25th used to wear their hair and pigtails so floured and pomatumed that many a good meal the barrack rats have made off our caputs, when we lay asleep on the wood benches of the guard-house.

"And they (the Horse Guards, we presume) have substituted cloth pantaloons for the pipeclayed breeches in which we fought at Minden and New York. This *may* be an improvement, for, in my time, our pipeclayed smalls were often a mass of mud on the march, and in wet weather one might as well have been in a bog of quick lime, for they regularly skinned us.

"And now, Quentin, my dear, dear laddie, to close an ower lang letter."

To Askerne, who came in at that moment, Quentin showed the letter of the worthy veteran, and it proved to the captain a source of some amusement, so quaint and old-fashioned were Girvan's ideas of the regiment and of the service.

"Well, Kennedy, what does Miss Flora's letter contain—eh?" asked Askerne, with a waggish smile.

"Don't jest, pray—I depend on your honour."

"You may, indeed, Quentin."

"It contained only this ring."

"Oho!" exclaimed Askerne, with a merry laugh, "these stones tell a story, my friend."

"A story!"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Is it possible that you don't know? Read their names; collect the initial letters, and tell me what they make?"

"Lapis-lazuli, opal, verde-antique, emerald, malachite, emerald."

"Well—what are these?"

"LOVE ME!" said Quentin, colouring with pleasure and surprise.

"The language of the stones seems new to you, Kennedy; but you are in luck, my friend. Who is the donor?"

"A dear, dear friend."

"Flora, you say—are you sure it is not Donna Isidora?"

"Impossible—thank Heaven!—a Miss Flora Warrender."

"Warrender—Warrender—I know that name; is she of Ardgour?"

"The same."

"Her father fell at the head of the Corsican Rangers, in Egypt. I knew him well—a brave old fellow as ever wore a red coat."

"You will not speak of this before our fellows?" urged Quentin, earnestly.

"Betray confidence! you have my word, Kennedy. And now let me to bed. I am for the baggage-guard; as we are falling back, it starts with



the artillery, two hours before the division marches to-morrow."

The ring had now a new interest in Quentin's eyes, and he was never tired of reading the six mystical stones.

"Dearest Flora," he said to himself, "how happy I am now, that not even that lovely Spaniard could for a moment tempt me to forget you!"

For all that, the "lovely Spaniard" was very nearly doing a vast deal of mischief.

Finding that he was alone, and all was quiet in his billet, he sat far into the hours of the silent night, writing a long, long letter to his friend the quartermaster—the story of his past adventures; and to Flora he enclosed the only gift he possessed—the ring of Madame de Ribeaupierre—with its remarkable story, and he had barely sealed the envelope when he heard the warning bugle for the baggage-guard to turn out sounding in the dark and silent streets of Alva; and then, with a weary head but happy heart, he sought his pallet, and without undressing, courted sleep for a couple of hours, before the drums of the division beat the *générale*.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE OLD BRIGADIER.

"I cannot deem why men so toil for fame,  
A porter is a porter, though his load  
Be the oceaned world, and although his road  
Be down the ages. What is in a name?  
Ah ! 'tis our spirit's curse to strive and seek.  
Although its heart is rich in pearls and ores,  
The sea complains upon a thousand shores ;  
Sea-like we moan for ever."—ALEXANDER SMITH.

By this time the snows of a bleak and early winter lay deep in the grassy glens and on the heathery hills of Carrick ; the mountain burns and rivulets that whilome flowed to the Doon and the Girvan were frozen hard and fast, and, suspended in mid-air, the cascade of the Lollards' Linn hung under its gothic arch like the beard of Father Christmas. Long icicles hung from the eaves of the houses and from the quaint stone gurgoyles of the old square keep.

The sound of the woodman's axe echoed in the leafless oakwood shaw and the brown thickets of Ardgour, and everywhere the hedges and trees were being lopped and trimmed by the shears or bill-hook of the gardener and husbandman.

In the clear frosty air, from many a mountain

loch rang up the cheers of the jovial curlers, with the roar of the granite curling-stones as they swept along the glassy *rinks*, and many a hearty fellow anticipated, his appetite sharpened by the frosty air, the banquet of salt beef and greens, with steaming whisky toddy, that closed his day's sport, at the Rohallion Arms in Maybole.

The cattle were in their heather-roofed shielings on the sheltered sides of the hills, the sheep and swine were among the pea-ricks, the dusky smoke of the ruddy winter fire ascended into the clear blue air from many a happy hearth and thatched homestead; but, as the roads that wound over hill and lea were buried deep in snow, news of the distant war in Spain come slowly and uncertainly to such remote dwellings as the castle of Rohallion—how much more uncertainly and slowly to those glens in Sutherland and Ross, where a few heaps of stones amid the desert waste *now* mark the birthplaces of those who manned the ranks of our noblest Scottish regiments in that old and glorious war.

As yet no further tidings had been heard either of Quentin Kennedy or of his court-martial. All that had been heard at home, through the columns of the *London Courier*, was that the slender army of Sir John Moore was falling back before the overwhelming masses of the enemy, and that ere long all might be confusion in its ranks—perhaps dismay!

After the receipt of the Adjutant-General Sir Harry Calvert's letter, the public papers were searched in vain for further tidings of Quentin Kennedy, but none were found. "Our own correspondent," with his camp-gossip, had no place in the newspaper columns of those days. The mails were then often late and always uncertain; many that came by sea were lost between storms and privateers, and the vague anxiety of Quentin's friends gradually became painful suspense, and amid it Lord Rohallion once more *wrote with energy* recommending his young protégé to the duke.

Dinner was over, and the wax-candles in the candelabra and girandoles of crystal had been lighted in the antique yellow drawing-room; Lady Rohallion, seated as usual in her own corner, was engaged, according to her wont, upon some piece of knitting or other work for the poor or old folks on the estate; her grey hair, somewhat needlessly powdered, was dressed back as of old. Lord Rohallion had brought his decanter of claret with him into the drawing-room, and placed it on a guéridon table by his side; and there he sat, in a cushioned easy-chair, lingering over the wine, and gazing dreamily into the large fire that blazed in the old-fashioned brass-basket between the delf-lined jambs of the fireplace.

The wind was sighing through the old syc-

mores of the avenue, and the roar of the sea was heard on the Partau Craig.

Flora was idling over the piano, practising the "Battle of Prague," the Duke of York's grand march, or some such piece of music then in vogue with young ladies, and near her hovered her present admirer, Jack Ferny of Fernwoodlee, a good-looking but brainless young fellow with sandy hair and a pea-green hunting-coat of the fast kind worn when the Pavilion was in its glory at Brighton. Ferny's estate was a small one, and he was evidently, as gossips said, "doing his best to make ducks and drakes of it."

He was strongly addicted to betting, and was a keen fox-hunter and sportsman. Beyond the kennel or the stable he had very few ideas ; and so little capability had he of adapting his conversation to time, place, or person, that he was now prosing away to the preoccupied Flora about sporting matters.

First it was of a famous match against time by the noted pedestrian, Captain Barclay of Urie ; and next, how, when coursing among the Carrick hills, his two favourite stag-hounds so pressed a hare they had put up yesterday, that she leaped down a precipice more than fifty feet in height, and then the hounds followed without the slightest hesitation.

" Good heavens ! they were killed, of course ! " said Flora, looking up with wonder.

“Killed, Miss Warrender?—egad, no! To the astonishment of us all, we saw puss and the hounds scouring along the road towards Maybole; but the Ayr stage, coming up with four spanking greys, caused her to make for a field of grass, and though turned five several times by the hounds, she made her escape down a burn at last, for of course they lost the scent.”

Finding that Flora had relapsed into listlessness, and that he failed to interest her by his scraps of information on the Newmarket Craven meeting, such as his horse Rolla, eight stone, running against Lord Sackville's Tag, also eight stone, across the flat for a thousand guineas, and that three to one was being taken on Rolla; that the betting was even at Epsom on the brown colt, by Eclipse, out of Mrs. Fitzherbert, and other gossip of similar character, he was compelled to resume his place near the old Lord, who was just in the act of pressing him politely to join in another glass of claret, when Jack Andrews limped in with a letter, which the running-footman had at that moment brought from Maybole. The mail from Ayr had broken down near the bank of the Doon in the snow, and the guard had brought on the bags to Dalrymple, on one of the horses, at the risk of his life. Oblong and official, the cover of the letter showed that it was “On His Majesty's service.”

“News of Quentin Kennedy, doubtless,” said



Lord Rohallion, peering about for his eyeglass.

"I pray God it be not unfortunate news about Cosmo!" thought Lady Winifred, for the tidings that came to many a poor mother in those days of war were sad enough sometimes.

Fernwoodlee, who had seen Quentin Kennedy, and knew the rumours concerning him and Flora, observed with annoyance that she was pale and colourless with ill-concealed interest, as she drew near Lord Rohallion, who on opening the missive found, to his no small surprise, that it referred neither to Quentin nor Cosmo, but to *himself*, and was from Sir Harry Calvert, who wrote, that "by the direction of his Royal Highness the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, he had the pleasure to acquaint him that his lordship's repeated applications and wishes for command of a brigade could now be gratified, and that his name would appear in the next *Gazette*; and that as troops were being assembled in great force at Shorncliffe camp, his Royal Highness hoped that his lordship would, within a week, be ready to set out for that place, where his services were greatly required, and where his proper staff would be selected."

This announcement fell with a startling effect upon Lord and Lady Rohallion.

"Appointed to a brigade—a brigade for foreign service! My dear Reynold, you cannot for a moment think of accepting this command?" said

Lady Winifred, anxiously taking his right hand between her own.

"I applied for it, as you are aware, dearest, repeatedly."

"About the time of the first unhappy expedition to Egypt; but you have long since relinquished all idea of serving again, and now—now, Reynold——"

"I am bound to accept it, Winny," said he, with more of sadness than of his old enthusiasm in his tone. "I am well up the list of major-generals," he added, with a faint smile, "and must do something for promotion. I may be a field-marshal yet, Winny, and a K.G. to boot."

Perhaps in his secret heart he would rather have wished that this command had *not* been offered him; he felt that he was rather old now, rather staid and formed in habit, and that he had too long settled down into the easy tenor of a quiet country life to care for the hurly-burly and anxiety of leading a brigade—it might ultimately be a division—in the field; but he knew that honour and duty compelled him to accept it.

Thus he wrote to the adjutant-general that very night accepting the command, and again urging that something should be done for his young protégé, Quentin Kennedy.

The letter left by the mail next morning, and Lord Rohallion prepared to bid farewell once more to the old mansion of his forefathers, and to buckle on the same sword that he had drawn on

the plains of Minden, when a stripling ensign, forty-nine years before.

It was with sad forebodings that Lady Rohallion prepared to break up her quiet and happy household, and bid farewell to friends and neighbours, for she proposed, in the first instance, to accompany her dear old husband to Shorncliffe, and Flora, their ward, who could not be left behind, to the unmistakable dismay of young Fernwoodlee, was to go with them.

She was the only one who felt any pleasure in the anticipated change and long journey by post-horses, as it promised at least all that novelty so charming to a young girl.

Poor Lady Rohallion ! She knew that by her husband's frequently expressed desire for military employment (parliamentary and diplomatic matters he detested) he was bound in honour—especially at a time when all Britain was in arms—to accept the first command offered him by the Duke of York, his old friend and comrade. She had long feared the crisis, but, as time passed on and no appointment came, she ceased to think of it ; but now it had come at last, and when least expected, and she was about to be subjected to a double separation, from her husband and her son.

Cut off as Britain was then from the continent, the majority of its people had few views or sympathies beyond their own fireside or immediate circle. The scene of the probable campaign in which Rohallion would serve, was wild and remote, the

people desperate and lawless ; our force in the field small, most pitifully so, when compared with the masses of the dreaded and then abhorred French.

She could perceive that her courtly old lord vacillated between sincere sorrow for leaving her and a love for his profession, with a hope of distinguishing himself and trying his strength and skill against some of the famous marshals of the new empire—the heroes of the Italian, German, and Egyptian campaigns—those corporals of *le petit caporal*, who had picked up their epaulettes on the barricades of Paris, or at the foot of the guillotine on which King Louis and the noblest in France died ; for thus were the marshal dukes of the great emperor viewed by the high-flying aristocracy of the Pitt administration, in the old fighting days “when George the Third was king.”

Lord Cockburn, in his “Memorials,” describes, with happy fidelity, “a singular race of old Scottish ladies,” that have completely passed away. “They were,” says he, “a delightful set ; strong-headed, warm-hearted, and high-spirited ; the fire of their tempers not always latent ; merry even in solitude ; very resolute ; indifferent about the modes and habits of the modern world, and adhering to their own ways, so as to stand out like primitive rocks above ordinary society. Their prominent qualities of sense, humour, affection, and spirit, were embodied in curious outsides, for all dressed, and spoke, and did exactly as they

chose; their language, like their habits, entirely Scottish, but without any other vulgarity than what perfect naturalness is sometimes taken for."

One of that genuine race was the handsome and stately old Lady Winifred of Rohallion.

A Scottish lady of the kindly old school, one who in infancy had been nursed and fondled by warm-hearted and periwigged old gentlemen and hoopskirted gentlewomen, who boasted that they were the last of the true old Scots, born when a Stuart was on the throne, and before their country was sold by the Whigs, and when her Parliament assembled on the ringing of St. Giles's bell; she who in girlhood had seen and known many of the gallant and loyal who had dined and drunk with Kilmarnock and Balmerino, and who had drawn their swords for James VIII. at Falkirk and Culloden; who treasured in secret the white rose, and yearly drank to "the king ower the water"—she felt now that she would be sadly at a loss and strange among English modern society. Her local ideas and usefulness, her strong Jacobite sympathies and loyalty to a dead race of kings, her nervous terror of democracy and foreigners, might pass for eccentricity; but how could those among whom she would now be thrown know or understand her little weakness for the heraldry, genealogy, connexions, and past glories of the Maxwells of Nithsdale and the Crawfords of Rohallion; for she knew them to



be people who spoke of the late cardinal-duke as "the dead Pretender ;" who voted all that was not English absurd or vulgar, and who basked in the rays of the star of Brunswick as it beamed on the breast of "the first gentleman in Europe," the future George IV. : with her powder and patches, her broad Scottish accent, and her high-heeled shoes, she felt that she would be, in such an atmosphere, an anachronism—a fish out of water !

These minor considerations of self, however, were completely merged or lost eventually in distress at the prospect of being separated from her husband, and in dread of the perils and hardships he might have to encounter at the seat of war—at his advanced years, too !

To add to her anxiety, the death-watch had ticked for several nights in the four-poster of the great old state bedroom, and this devilish little *pediculus* wrought the good lady as much alarm as Sir Harry Calvert's missive from the Horse Guards had done.

Amid all this, Flora's chief thought was, that at Shorncliffe she would be nearer Quentin Kennedy, by the entire length nearly of Britain, and as Lord Rohallion was to pass through London, he would see the Duke of York personally about him and his prospects.

The last night they were to spend in the old castle was a wild, cold, and bitter one. The waves of the Firth of Clyde boiled in mountains of white



foam over the Partan Craig, and as Elsie Irvine said, "the yowls of the sealghs were heard on the wind, just as they were on the night that Quentin was shipwrecked, and a' body kent they were never heard for nocht."

The tempest roared round the snow-clad promontory on which the old castle stood, and on this night one of the oldest sycamores in the avenue was uprooted with a mighty crash by the wind, an omen decidedly of coming woe. Black clouds sailed like ghostly ships across the otherwise clear frosty sky, and in the distance the scud and the ocean blended together in storm and darkness.

On that night, the *last* they were to spend in their old home, sleep scarcely visited the eyes of either Lady Rohallion or her husband.

She was full of melancholy forebodings, tears, and prayers, the result of her education and temperament, and she was thinking of Flora's parents, of John Warrender of Ardgour, who fell in Egypt, and of his widow's broken heart; while in Lord Rohallion's mind, real regret for the coming separation was mingling with anxieties and little vanities about how he would handle his brigade in the field, as he had so long grown "rusty."

As the morning dawned—the morning of a clear and bright December day, Lady Winifred's spirits rose a little, especially after the sun burst forth auspiciously from the parting clouds.

The poor quartermaster was heart-broken with

the idea of being left behind; but he had the household to look after, and all the live stock, including Quentin's terrier and Flora's birds, all of which she solemnly committed to his care.

On this morning, when they were to set out, trunks, mails, imperials, and all the usual incumbrances of a long journey were borne forth to the haunted gate where the carriage stood, with its four horses pawing the hard frosty ground, and their breath ascending like steam in the clear cold air. Old Jack Andrews limped about, whistling the point of war, with uncommon vigour, and with a new lightness in his eye and step, at the prospect of seeing military life again.

All the tenantry of the estate and the fishermen of the hamlet mustered at the old castle-gate, and the Rohallion volunteers, all in full uniform, with cocked-hats and pigtails, were there in honour of the brave old Brigadier and his gentle lady; and there too, were all the household, from bluff Mr. Spillsby the butler, to John Legate, the long, lean running-footman, and all looked sad and downhearted.

The dominie had overnight prepared a long Latin address to read on the occasion, but happily for all concerned, he had left it behind him; and now his great horn barnacles were obscured and dim, as he lifted his old three-cornered castor and kissed her ladyship's hand with profound reverence and affection, and then Miss Flora's, as they were assisted by Fernwoodlee and the quartermaster into the carriage.

“Farewell, dominie,” said the old Lord, as he shook the good man’s hand. “I’ll expect you to write me sometimes, and tell us how all the folk here and the school bairns are coming on.”

“Woe is me, Rohallion! and you are again going to follow the drum!” he replied, shaking his queue and queer old wig: “it was invented by Bacchus, who, as Polyænus declares, used it first in the Indian war, but from the sorrow created by its sound, I verily believe its inventor to be the devil—the great author of the bagpipe.”

“Hush, dominie,” said his lordship, laughing, “for here comes Pate of Maybole.”

This was the piper of the barony town, in the burgh livery, who now appeared; and as the coachman whipped up his horses, the sobs of the servants were drowned in the *skirl* with which Pate blew out his bag to the air of the good Lord Moira’s Farewell to Scotland:

“Loudon’s bonnie woods and braes,  
I maun leave them a’, lassie,  
For who can thole when Britain’s faes,  
Wad gie Britons law, lassie?”

And striding as only a Scottish piper strides and swaggers, he played before the carriage down the avenue and out upon the high road; while there was not an eye unmoistened at that time-worn castle gate, as its old lord and his lady went forth upon their way “to the wars in the far-awa land.”

It was a silent house that night in Rohallion.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE RETREAT.

“ Lords and dukes and noble princes,  
On thy fatal banks were slain ;  
Fatal banks that gave to slaughter  
All the pride and flower of Spain.  
Furious press the hostile squadrons—  
Furious he repels their rage ;  
Loss of blood at length enfeebles—  
Who can war with thousands wage ?”  
*Old Spanish Ballad.*

ON the 11th of December the division of Sir John Hope quitted Alva and marched towards Tordesillas.

By this time Sir John Moore had discovered that Bonaparte, abandoning his project of entering the southern provinces, was on the march to intercept his retreat towards the sea-coast and Portugal, while another column was advancing against him from the direction of Burgos.

To frustrate a design that might prove so fatal to his slender army, Moore was compelled to relinquish all hope of fighting the Duke of Dalmatia ; so, countermanding the order for the advance of his various divisions, he requested

Romana to defend the bridge of Mansilla-de-los-Mulos, and while he fell back towards the Douro, ordered all the heavy baggage to be conveyed to Astorga.

On hearing of these movements, Bonaparte exclaimed energetically to Soult, who related it to Major Charles Napier of the 43rd—

*“ Moore is the only general now fit to contend with me ; I shall advance against him in person.”*

Marching to his left, Moore crossed the Douro at Toro, to form a junction with Sir David Baird on the 21st December at Vallada. On the day before this, near the magnificent Abbey of Sahagun, nine hundred French cavalry pressing on, were met by four hundred of ours under Lord Paget, who repulsed them by one brilliant charge, sabreing thirty, and taking two hundred and sixty prisoners.

Bonaparte advanced with his main body, a hundred thousand strong, by four routes, towards Benevente, along roads buried deep in snow, through which, by force or bribery, he had thousands of Spanish labourers cutting pathways, for the winter had set in with unusual rigour ; but the division of Sir John Hope, whose cavalry and artillery suffered much by the loss of their horses, which died fast of the glanders, entered the town before him on the 24th of the same month.

The sufferings of the army during this retreat towards the north-west angle of Spain were very

great, and the regimental officers were compelled to carry their personal effects—at least such as were absolutely necessary—about with them in bags or knapsacks, for the baggage animals (carts there were none) died, or were lost by the way. All bandsmen, batsmen, servants, and grooms were very properly turned into the ranks, as Moore had resolved that there should be available *as many muskets as possible*. Seven officers had but one tent, and every mounted officer had to groom and rub down his own horse: arrangements whereat the grumbling, from the staff particularly, was deep if not loud. The rations were also diminished: but of all the corps none suffered *less* than the Highland regiments. After marching hundreds of miles through snow, rain, and storm, by roads unchanged since the Moors traversed them, the 79th and 92nd particularly had never a man on the sick-list, a fact attributable either to their native hardihood or the serviceable nature of their *costume*.

Snow was falling heavily as Hope's division entered the crumbling mud walls of the small and miserable town of Benevente in Leon, where the officers and men, irrespective of rank, crowded for shelter into the houses and the castle, while a line of cavalry picquets with a few pieces of artillery, held the bridge of Orviegro.

Weary and foot-sore, Quentin, after cleaning his musket, flung himself on a heap of straw in



one of the rooms of that wonderful old castle which is the residence of the Dukes of Ossuna, and which Southey, in his letters from Spain, describes as one of the finest monuments of the age of Spanish chivalry, adding, "we have nothing in England which approaches to its grandeur. Berkeley, Raby, even Warwick and Windsor, are poor fabrics in comparison."

Projecting from a wall, a gigantic arm and hand in armour sustain a magnificent lamp to light the grand staircase of the castle.

Its open galleries and horse-shoe Saracenic arches, that spring from fluted and twisted columns of porphyry and granite; its long aerial-like cloisters, with jasper pillars, jagged arches, and tessellated floors; its recessed seats, deep niches, and canopied alcoves, covered with quaint arabesques in scarlet, blue, and gold, were now crowded by wet, weary, and almost shoeless (certainly shirtless) infantry, who piled their muskets or heaped up their knapsacks and camp kettles, without heed, in those noble apartments, where they smoked and made fires of whatever they could lay hands on; many a gilded chair became fuel, and pictures by Velasquez, Murillo, and other eminent painters of the Spanish school, were torn from the walls, and, with a curse on the Spaniards, rolled up and thrust under a pot of rice soup.

In fact, the troops were now fast becoming reckless, and everything that was combustible was

destroyed on this occasion, the family archives of the Dukes of Ossuna alone escaping.

Maddened by cold and hunger, they cared not how they made themselves comfortable for the night; but with the first peep of dawn, the report of cannon was heard at the bridge, the bugles sounded the turn-out, and hundreds of hoarse voices were heard shouting,

“Stand to your arms! turn out! The enemy are coming on—the out-picquets are engaged!”

The division got under arms to continue its retreat, which the flank companies were ordered to cover by forming in front of the town; and so came in this dreary 25th of December.

“A merry Christmas and a happy new year!” cried Monkton to Quentin, as the grenadiers of Askerne left the battalion double-quick, and just in time to witness a very brilliant cavalry encounter.

It was about the hour of nine in the morning, and from the slope on which Benevente stands, they could see in a little plain below the bridge of the Orviegro, three squadrons of the Imperial Guard led by a dashing officer in a furred pelisse, skirmishing with the out-picquets of the light cavalry, and endeavouring to cross the river by a ford there. The red flashing of the carbines on both sides was incessant; in the clear frosty air the reports rang sharply, and the figures of the Imperial Light Cavalry, in their brilliant uniforms, were distinctly visible upon the spotless back-

ground of snow. No one was hit on either side, however, as the dragoon is seldom much of a shot.

But suddenly two squadrons of the splendid 10th Hussars, by order of Lord Paget, and led by Brigadier-General Stewart, defiled out of Benevente to support the picquets, their loose scarlet pelisses and plumes waving as they galloped along, and rapidly forming line, they advanced with a loud hurrah, and keeping their horses well in hand, lest they should be blown, against the Chasseurs à Cheval of the Guard, who drew up on the crest of an eminence to receive them.

Many who looked on held their breath, and excitement repressed the rising cheer as the adverse lines of cavalry met ! There was a mingled yell and hurrah ; the long straight swords of the French on one side, and the crooked sabres of the 10th on the other, all uplifted, flashed keenly in the morning sun ; then there was a terrible shock ; hussars and chasseurs were all mingled in a wild tumultuous mass, and on both sides horses and men went down among bloody and trodden snow ; but the French fled at full speed, leaving the ground strewn with killed and wounded men, and encumbered by scared horses that rushed about with empty saddles.

Eighty-five French Chasseurs and fifty of our smart Hussars were lying there dead or writhing in all the agony of sword wounds among the snow ; but with loud cheers the survivors came trotting

into Benevente, bringing with them seventy dismounted prisoners, among whom was the leader of the French, superbly dressed in a green uniform that had a profusion of gold and fur trimming upon it. He was led forward between two Hussars, who had each his carbine resting on his thigh.

"Paget," exclaimed Brigadier-General Sir Charles Stewart, hurrying up at a canter, "allow me to present you with a valuable prisoner. We have just had the honour to take Lieutenant-General Lefebre Desnouettes, commander of the cavalry of the Imperial Guard."

Lord Paget bowed very low to the captive.

Pale, exhausted, and covered with sword-cuts, he was the picture of a soldier; and his eyes had that keen, bright, almost wolfish expression, peculiar to those who have recently stared the grim King of Terrors face to face on the battle-field. He was led away, and was soon after presented to Sir John Moore, to whom he spoke with intense bitterness of his own defeat.

"Bonaparte," said he, "is the minion of fortune; he never forgives the unfortunate, but ever believes them culpable!"

Moore sought to console him, and presented him with a splendid oriental scimitar, which Lefebre ever after preserved with gratitude, and wore in England, whither he was despatched at once in charge of Captain Wyndham, one of the general's aides-de-camp.

The division continued its retreat by the ruined walls and mouldering citadel of Astorga, and Villa Franca del Bierzo, and, though many perished by the way, Quentin Kennedy, endowed by spirit and enthusiasm rather than bodily strength, bore up manfully amid the fatigue, the privations, and the horrors of that long and devious retreat of so many hundred miles, along roads covered with deep snow, over steep and rugged mountain sierras, through half-frozen rivers, where the bridges had been broken down or blown up, and by narrow defiles, followed by an enthusiastic enemy, whose well-victualled force, outnumbering by three times that of Moore, came on fast and surely, with flying artillery, lightly-armed dragoons, and pestilent little Voltigeurs, skirmishing every foot of the way—the sharp ringing of carbines and the boom of field-pieces being the invariable close of each day's march, and the prelude to its resumption in the cold, dark early morning, when the cavalry rear-guard held the advance of the foe in check, till the jaded and half-slept infantry pushed on, and on, and on—hopeless, heartless, and in rags, leaving, en route, in the form of dead and dying men, women, children, and horses, traces of the havoc that neglect and disaster were making in the ranks, for now the Spanish authorities omitted utterly to supply the troops with either billets or rations, or any necessary provisions.

A junction of Hope's division with the main body of the British army was effected, however; on the 31st of December, Moore quitted Astorga with his famine-stricken force, and so hot and fierce was the pursuit, that on the following day, the first of the new year, Napoleon entered the little town at the head of eighty thousand horse and foot, with two hundred pieces of cannon, while many thousand bayonets more were on the march to join him !

The Emperor, however, went no further than Astorga, for there he left to Soult—to use his own inflated words—“the glorious mission of destroying the British—of pursuing them to the point of embarkation, and driving them into the sea !”

And the state of matters we have described continued until the army reached Lugo, after a five days' march through a rugged and savage country.



## CHAPTER XIV.

## FRESH DISASTERS.

“ Oh, plenteous England ! comfort's dwelling-place  
Blest be thy well-fed, glossy, John-Bull face !  
Blest be the land of Aldermanic paunches,  
Rich turtle-soup, and glorious ven'son haunches !  
Inoculated by mad martial ardour,  
Why did I ever quit thy well-stored larder ?  
Why, fired with scarlet-fever, in ill time,  
Come here to fight and starve in this accursed clime ? ”

ON this march the army was in arrears of pay, so Quentin's remaining moidores soon melted away, as he shared them, to the last vintin, fraternally with his friends and comrades ; but long ere the army reached Lugo, he saw many a strange and startling episode of horror and suffering.

Moore's troops continued to make forced marches to prevent the foe from closing on their flanks, and now every day provisions grew scarcer.

The skies were lowering, and heavy clouds rested on the tops of the gloomy mountains ; the rough, narrow, and wretched roads were knee-deep in drifted snow ; half-famished and half-frozen, the soldiers became desperate, and, in

defiance of Moore's orders, plundered whatever they could get to satisfy the cravings of nature.

From Astorga to Villa Franca (in the mountain district called the Bierzo—so lovely in summer), is a route of fully sixty English miles, through wild and savage mountain tracts and passes, where the horses failed, as their shoes were worn away ; but though there were plenty of iron-works near Villa Franca, there was no time to re-shoe them, so every hour saw whole sections of our noble English horses shot down, lest they should fall into the hands of the pursuing enemy ; and then the dismounted troopers had to trudge on foot, laden with all their useless trappings.

One of the 3rd Light Dragoons of the German Legion, whose horse had been shot according to the usage of war, was urged by Major Burgwesel to go on faster.

"Herr Major," said he, "the game is pretty well played out with me, and if you expect me to march quicker with all this load, you may as well shoot me as you have done my poor horse."

"Himmel und Erde, get on, fellow !" shouted the major, with an angry malediction.

On this, the exasperated dragoon placed a pistol to his mouth and blew out his brains, to the horror of the stern major.

Now came rain in torrents, and even the baggage had to be dragged through the melting snow, as the mules and burros perished in scores by the

way. Then the spare arms were abandoned and the extra ammunition destroyed ; next, knapsacks were cast away occasionally, and everything that might serve to lighten the burden of the despairing soldiers, many of whom were found frozen and dead in the bodegas and cellars of Villa Franca by the French advanced guard.

A mile beyond this place, poor Ensign Pimple (as Monkton used to call him) gave in, utterly incapable of proceeding further ; weeping like a child, in utter prostration, he sank in exhaustion by the wayside, and no doubt perished during the night.

After passing Benvibre the French cavalry came up with the long line of stragglers in the rear, and slashed among them right and left, treading others under foot as they galloped through, and so stupefied were some by fatigue and others by intoxication, that they could neither resist nor seek safety in flight. Two thousand were taken prisoners between Astorga and Lugo ; a thousand more fled away towards Portugal ; many of these were concealed by the Spaniards, and few were ever heard of again.

So on and on the army toiled from Villa Franca to Castro up the Monte del Cebrero, a long and continued ascent, through one of the wildest districts in Spain, where, in summer, woods of umbrageous oak, alder, and hazel, with groves of wild pears, cherries, and mulberries, make the landscape lovely ; but now it was wild

and desolate ; and there, to add to other misfortunes, the sick and wounded had to be abandoned among the melting snow.

On the sloping road towards Castro-Gonzalo, Askerne found a poor rifleman of the old 95th lying on his back, and blowing bells of blood from his mouth ; he had been riddled by canister shot, and all his limbs were broken.

“ Unfortunate fellow,” said he, with commiseration ; “ what can I do for you ?”

“ Have me shot, sir—shot dead, for the mercy of God !” was the terrible reply.

“ I looked round,” says an officer in one of his letters, “ when we had hardly gained the highest point of those slippery precipices, and saw the rear of the army winding along the narrow road—I saw the way marked by the wretched people, who lay on all sides expiring from fatigue and the severity of the cold ; their bodies reddened in spots the white surface of the ground.”

There a Portuguese bullock driver who had been with the British since the landing of the army, was seen dying amid the snow on his knees, with his hands clasped in an attitude of prayer before a little wooden crucifix, a consolation not left to the hundreds of our soldiers, who were flinging themselves down in utter despair to die, with curses and bitter imprecations on their lips—curses on the Spaniards, who, they fancied, had betrayed them.

And there, too, were women and little children !

About nightfall, just as the grenadiers of the Borderers struggled up the Monte del Cebrero through all the horrible débris that the columns in front had left behind, they passed several of the sick and artillery waggons, broken down or abandoned by the wayside. In these were many soldiers' wives and sick men dead and frozen !

In one was a woman in labour dying, with her infant, amid the icy drift ; in another a woman already dead, with a wailing infant tugging at her white cold breast. The little one was taken by good old Sergeant-major Calder, who wrapped it in his great-coat, but it died of cold ere the summit of the mountain was attained.

From one of those covered sick-waggons that lay broken down and abandoned among the snow and sleet, there came the sound of a strange wailing song sung by a woman. This prompted Quentin to leave the ranks, which were somewhat irregular now, and peep in. There he found a soldier of the 25th lying dead, and his wife, with their child, sitting by his side, in misery. They formed a touching group !

She was evidently deranged by suffering, terror, and sorrow, and she was a pretty young woman, too. She heard not the wailing of the infant that nestled among the wet straw by her side, but sat with her husband's head in her lap, and her hollow eyes fixed on vacancy, as she toyed

with his hair, and “crooned” a fragment of an old Scottish song to a plaintive air, somewhat like that of “My Love’s in Germanie.”

“They say my love is dead,  
Gone to his gory bed,  
They say my love is dead,  
Ayont the sea.  
In the stillness o’ the night,  
When the moon is shining bright,  
My true-love’s shroud sae white  
Haunteth me,  
Haunteth me!  
My true love’s shroud sae white  
Haunteth me!”

“Good heavens, sir,” said a soldier, “it is poor Allan Grange, the sergeant who was broken at Colchester, and his wife, too! She’s clean demented, puir thing! Ailie, woman, come awa; the regiment is moving on.”

Quentin too, tried his powers of persuasion, but without avail, and the stern order of Cosmo, to “Close up—close up, and move on—no loitering!” together with the distant boom of a French field-piece, the flash of which came redly through the drift and darkness, compelled them to leave her. If she lived she must soon after have fallen into the hands of the enemy. At all events, Ailie Grange was heard of no more.

In one of the many skirmishes with the enemy’s light dragoons, a singular instance of gross treachery occurred at the little village of Palacios de la Valduerna. There a sergeant of our 7th



Hussars, belonging to Captain Duckinfield's detachment, vanquished, in single combat, a French dragoon and took him prisoner. The Frenchman threw down his sword, drew off his leather gauntlet, and held out his hand in token of amity. Then the sergeant, with the characteristic generosity of a gallant Englishman, also put forth his right hand; but inserting his left into his holster, the Frenchman drew a pistol, blew his captor's wrist to pieces, and killed his horse under him.

Before the poor hussar could rise from under his fallen charger, the would-be assassin was bayoneted by some of Romana's Spanish soldiers, who in their rage and hatred, made up a fire and consumed his body to ashes; after this, in blind vengeance, they somewhat needlessly slew his horse.

At this part of the disastrous retreat nearly a hundred waggons that were coming on, laden with shoes and clothes for Romana's Spaniards, from England, but too late to be of any avail, fell into the hands of the enemy.

As the column defiled past them, Quentin saw the body of an officer lying dead under one of the wheels in a pool of blood, snow, and mire. A vague recollection, combined with a horrible anxiety, made him draw near to observe the corpse.

It was that of Warriston! his kind and generous friend, Captain Richard Warriston, of the Scots Brigade; but "push on—push on,"

was the order, and there was no time given for thought, examination, or inquiry. . . . .

On, and on yet ! and at last it was found necessary, at Nogales, to abandon the military chest. Why its contents were not distributed among the troops it is difficult to say, unless that time would have been lost by the process of division. Two bullock-carts, laden with twenty-five thousand pounds in dollars, were backed over a lofty precipice, and fell crashing from the summit among the rocks and snow beneath ; and then as the waggons broke and the casks burst, the broad silver dollars flew far and wide.

It was hoped that this money would escape the observation of the French, and so fall into the hands of the Spaniards. Part was found by the former, part by the Gallician peasantry, and a Highland tradition tells us of a thrifty Scots paymaster who contrived to conceal a cask or two under a certain cork-tree, where he found the specie all safe when he went back to Spain for it, after Toulouse ; and that he bought therewith a snug little estate on the shore of the Moray Firth.

At the very time that the bullock-carts with the treasure were cast over the precipice, by some absurd mistake, Quentin's battalion, with two pieces of cannon, were engaged with the enemy in order *to protect it !*

Evening was coming on, and shimmering

through the slanting sheet, a cloud of French cavalry passed along the snowy and miry way, while the two field guns were ploughing lanes of death through their ranks; but still with brandished sabres and cries of "Vive la France! Vive l'Empereur!" they came on thundering to the attack.

"Square against cavalry!" was now the cry; "square on the grenadiers!"

It was formed double-quick, and a smile of grim joy spread over every sallow and weather-beaten face as the toil-worn and tattered regiment made the movement, enclosing many of the wounded foes as well as friends. The light company formed the rear face of the square.

Cosmo was undoubtedly brave, for a lofty expression of pride and defiance spread over his features on beholding the rapidity with which the square was formed. Jolly old Middleton drew off his gloves and stuck them in his belt; he then flourished an enormous sabre, so rusty and notched in the edge that it was known as "Jock Middleton's hand-saw," saying—

"I like to use my tools, lads, without mittens; the cat that wore gloves never caught mice."

The officers dressed the four faces as well as the shattered and unequal state of the companies could form them now. Sending a last discharge of grape plunging into the masses of the foe, the gunners rushed for shelter behind the wall of

bayonets, and now through the gloom of evening, the wrack, mist, and smoke, on came the French dragoons like rolling thunder !

As the ground was tolerably open the square was approached on three faces.

Against one was a brigade of cuirassiers, their brass helmets with scarlet plumes and brass corslets with elaborate shoulder-belts all dimmed by rain ; opposed to another was the Lancer Regiment of Napoleon-Louis, the hereditary Duc de Berg, with white plumes and kalpecks in their busbies ; and on the third face came the Light Dragoons of Ribeaupierre, in pale green lapelled with white and laced with silver, their tricolors waving above a forest of flashing sabres.

Quentin felt his heart beating wildly as they came on. In the square, every eye lit up, every brow was knit, and every lip compressed ; but not a shot was fired until the foe was within pistol-range, when, from the faces of the square, there opened a close and disastrous fire, first from the right to the left, and then it became a wild roar of musketry, the men loading and firing as fast as they could, while many a pistol and carbine-shot took effect in their ranks, and Quentin was covered by the blood of a man who was killed thus by his side.

Yells of death were mingled with shouts of rage and defiance, as horse and man went down on every hand, the front squadrons swerving or re

coiling madly on the rear, thus making all advance impossible; steeds reared, plunged, and neighed, their riders groaned, shrieked, and swore; swords, helmets, shakos, and broken lances were seen flying into the air, while lancers and cuirassiers, wounded and dying, were crushed and trodden flat by hoofs and falling horses.

The whole cuirassier brigade became an undistinguishable mass of confusion and indiscriminate slaughter; but not a horseman came within sword's point of that steady and invincible square of infantry.

At that moment, when the firing slackened a little, the voice of the Master of Rohallion was heard.

"Well done, my brave Borderers! kneeling ranks, fire a volley—ready—present—*fire!*"

It rang like thunder in the winter air, and found a thousand echoes among the mountains, and ere these died away the ruin of the foe was complete. This was the first occasion on which Quentin had fired a shot in grim earnest, and a thrill passed through his heart as he pulled the trigger and sent a bullet on its errand, while ignorant of its effect amid the smoke in front.

Ere the butts were again on the earth in their original position, and the bristling bayonets were pointed upward, amid the smoke that rolled around them like a murky curtain, the cavalry were seen in full flight, leaving a terrible débris of death and



bloodshed behind them on the snow-clad mountain slope.

"The battalion will form quarter-distance column," cried Cosmo, as coolly as if he was in Colchester again. Then he ordered the pouches of the dead and wounded to be emptied, as ammunition was running short. The field guns were then limbered up, and once more the weary retreat was resumed with all speed.

Sergeant Ewen Donaldson, whose leg was shattered by a carbine-ball, was here left behind, after some of the soldiers had made an effort to drag him along with them.

"Push on, boys—push on, and never mind me," said the poor fellow; "before morning I shall be gone to where I'm fast wearin' awa'—the land o' the leal."

And this, too probably, was the case.

The tender and compassionate heart of Sir John Moore bled at the misery he beheld hourly on this miserable retreat. He bitterly deplored the relaxation of discipline consequent on it, and he never ceased issuing orders, warm exhortations, cheering addresses, and stirring appeals to honour and courage, to keep up the spirit of those under his command; but despair and sullen apathy reigned in many instances in officers and men alike, while the retreat lasted. But, with all this, grand and touching instances of humanity were not wanting to brighten the terrible picture.



An infantry officer, in despair of proceeding further, turned aside into a thicket of trees, to lie down and die unseen and uncared for; but there he found a soldier's wife stretched at the point of death, and, with the last effort of expiring nature, she implored him to receive and preserve her child. He did so, and endued with fresh strength and energy by the trust, he carried the infant on his back, and it never quitted his care till he reached one of the transports in the bay of Vigo, after the battle of Corunna.\*

At a place where the green coats of the 95th dotted the snow, showing where a skirmish had been, Quentin assisted a rifleman to place one of his comrades in a waggon that stood near.

"Tom—old fellow," said the sufferer, in a weak voice, for he was dying with a bullet in his chest, and rustled fatuously among the damp straw on which they placed him; "I say, Tom—we've long been comrades."

"Yes, Bill," said the other, in a husky voice, "ever since Copenhagen."

"Well, when I'm dead, I want you to do summut for me, and I'll give you all I have in the world. My kit's wore out, ever so long ago, but I've three biscuits in my havresack, and you're welcome to them; give one to poor Pat Riley's widow."

"But wot am I to do for you, Bill?"

\* Edinburgh Annual Register.

“Close my right eye, Tom ; dont’ee forget ; the cursed French knocked t’other out at Vimiera.”

“Yes, Bill—I was wounded that day, too.”

Bill’s eye was closed, and the snow and the sods were over him within an hour after this, and close by Tom sat, munching his legacy, for he was starving, with his fierce moist eyes fixed on the little mound where his old comrade lay.

## CHAPTER XV.

## A SMILE OF FORTUNE.

“ But little ; I am arm’d, and well prepared.—  
Give me your hand, Bassanio ; fare-you-well !  
Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you ;  
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind  
Than is her custom.”—*The Merchant of Venice*.

No music was heard now on that dreary retreat. The bagpipes of the indomitable Highlanders sent up their bold, wild skirl at times upon the winter blast, showing where the Camerons, the Gordon Highlanders, or the Black Watch trod bare-knee’d through the snow ; but no other quickstep met the ear ; even Leslie’s march cheered the Borderers no more ; and many a man among them wished himself with the other battalions of the corps, broiling in India, or serving anywhere but in Spain.

To reach their transports and abandon the country by sea, without risking the slaughter of a useless battle with those whose numbers were so overwhelming, was, for a time, the sole object of the British generals.

Disorders usually prevail in a retreating army,

and many circumstances served to augment them on this occasion. Our soldiers were enraged by the apparent apathy or treachery of the Spanish officials, who withheld all supplies; these latter, at the same time did not conceal that they believed themselves to be abandoned by the British to the enemy, in whose overwhelming numbers, with true Spanish obstinacy, they refused to believe.

Perceiving, however, that unless by some vigorous resistance he crippled his pursuers, a flight by sea would be impossible, Sir John Moore recalled General Fraser's division from the Vigo road, and on the 6th of January, after a sharp cavalry encounter at Cacabelos, where Colbert, a distinguished French general, was killed, he took up a position near the city of Lugo, on the Minho, in Galicia, a place situated on high ground.

So pressed were the cavalry, and so dreadfully had the horses suffered during the retreat, that on entering Lugo many fell dead beneath their riders, and others were mercifully shot. Four hundred of their carcasses, with bridles, saddles, and holsters on—the steeds that whilome had been in the ranks of our splendid 7th, 10th, 15th, and 18th Hussars—lay in the market-place and thoroughfares. There were none of our soldiers who had strength to dig trenches deep enough to bury them; the Spaniards were too lazy or apathetic for the work, or cared not to attempt it while the enemy's voltigeurs or sharpshooters were within

sight of their old ruined walls. Swelling in the rain, bursting, and putrefying, the bodies lay there, a prey to herds of devouring dogs, and flocks of carrion birds.

At Lugo the army might have rested for some days, had the bridges of the now swollen rivers been blown up; but the mines had failed, and on the 5th of January the pursuing French came in sight in force, and at last a battle was looked for.

The evening of the 5th proved a very eventful one for the humble fortunes of our hero, and the *last* of his service in the ranks of the King's Own Borderers.

About four in the afternoon, during a partial cessation of the sleet and rain which had been incessant for so many days, melting the snow on the mountains and swelling the rivers, Quentin found himself posted as an advanced sentinel in front of the line of out-picquets, near the road leading from Lugo to Nogales. Dark clouds enveloped the mighty range of mountains in the distance, but from their summits it was known, by the intelligence of scouts, that the enemy was descending in force.

A blue patch was visible here and there overhead, through the flying vapour, and there, already bright and twinkling, a few "sentinel stars set their watch in the sky."

After the slaughter of the worn or half-dead cavalry horses, all was still, and now not a sound

stirred the air save the tolling of the cathedral bell in Lugo, or the roar of the Minho, swollen by a hundred tributaries, and rushing in wild career through an uncultivated waste of stunted laurel bushes to mingle with the Atlantic.

That day Quentin had tasted no food save a handful of *corn* which he received from Major Middleton, whom he had found fraternally sharing a feed of it with his now lean and gaunt Rosinante-looking charger, which he had stabled under a cork-tree and covered with his blanket, complimenting himself by the old adage that "a merciful man is merciful to his beast."

Oppressed by the sombre scenery, the drenched and uncultivated waste, and the gloom of the December evening, Quentin leaned on his musket, a prey to a fit of intense despondency, and tears almost came to his eyes as he thought of all the horrors he had witnessed since the day on which he landed at the bay of Maciera, the campaign he had served so fruitlessly, and of *what* was before him on landing, friendlessly, in England.

Better it was to die in Spain, like poor Warriston, whose dead face, as he lay with others, mangled and doubtless yet unburied, in that savage mountain waste, amid the melting snows, came keenly back to memory now!

From this unpleasant reverie he was suddenly roused by seeing a mounted officer, muffled in a blue cloak, with a plain unplumed cocked-hat,



riding along the chain of advanced sentinels, questioning or addressing a few words to each, as if to ascertain that all were on the alert.

Gradually he came on, his horse, a lean but clean-limbed and active bay, picking its way among the rough stones and stunted laurel bushes. As he drew nearer, Quentin could perceive him to be a general officer, accompanied, at a little distance, by an orderly sergeant in the blue, white-faced, and silver-braided uniform of the 18th Hussars. On his approaching, Quentin "presented arms."

"Walk about," said he, while touching his hat. This is the usual response of an officer when ceremony is to be waived; but, immediately after, perceiving by Quentin's uniform—for the poor fellow had now parted with his great-coat as well as his blanket, and in a similar fashion—that he was *not* a private soldier, he came close up to him, and said, "You are, I presume, aware that the enemy is in front?"

"Yes, sir—and more immediately, Ribeau-pierre's dragoon brigade and Lallemand's corps."

"Exactly," replied the other, with a pleasant smile; "I like to find a young soldier well-informed of the work in hand—that he knows what he is about, and takes an interest in his profession. Your regiment is——"

"The 25th Foot, sir—2nd battalion."

"You are, I see, a volunteer?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long have you served?"

"Nearly since the campaign opened."

"Without promotion, too!"

"And likely to be without it now, I fear."

"It is somewhat unusual for a volunteer to be posted as a sentinel," said the other, with a keen glance.

"I go where Colonel Crawford orders me," replied Quentin; "and if there was much risk, I spared him the trouble by volunteering readily."

"A young fellow of spirit! Are you born to a fortune?"

"Fortune!" repeated Quentin, with a start, and in a voice that was very touching; "alas, sir, I fear that I am born only to *failure*!"

"Failure?" said the other, as his colour deepened.

"Yes, sir—like our expedition to Spain."

The officer seemed much struck by a remark that appeared to coincide with certain ideas and fears of destiny that were peculiarly his own. He knitted his brows, and said—

"Young man, you speak very confidently of the fate of 'this expedition to Spain.' Do you know what you are talking about?"

"I trust, sir, that I do," replied Quentin, modestly.

"Then, perhaps," said the other, with a smile as he propounded what he deemed a puzzling question, "you will be good enough to explain the *maxims* which guide an expedition by land or sea?"

"I shall try," said Quentin, colouring deeply

and seeking to remember some of the old quartermaster's enthusiastic tutelage.

"Do so."

"There are, I think, four great maxims.

"Yes—at least, and I shall be glad to hear them."

"First, sir, in an armed expedition of any kind, there should always be secrecy of design, and also, of all preparation. Second: the force and the means employed should always be proportionate to the *end* to be achieved; (which is not *our* case here, else we had been in Madrid to-night and not fugitives in Lugo.) Third: there is requisite a complete knowledge of the country for which the expedition is destined; in that at least our brave Sir John Moore is unequalled. Fourth: there is required a commander, who like him has all the turn of mind which is most adapted for that particular branch of the war."

"Upon my honour you are a very singular young man," replied the other, with something between a smile and a frown hovering on his fair and open countenance. "You might teach Cæsar himself a lesson; but before you go any further in your remarks, I think it right to inform you that *I* am Lieutenant-General Sir John Moore."

Quentin was silenced and petrified. He felt sinking with shame at his own confidence and sudden effrontery, both the offspring of gloomy disappointment; then he strove to remember all he had said, and continued to gaze almost stupidly

at the worthy general, who seemed to enjoy the situation and laughed heartily, and said, in a manner that was winning and reassuring—

“ I wish Davie Baird or Lord Paget had been with me to hear all this !”

Mild in face and disposition, though somewhat fierce in temper when a boy, Sir John Moore possessed a figure that was tall and graceful. His features were perfectly regular ; his eyes were hazel, and his hair of a rich brown colour. His whole face was expressive of cheerfulness and benignity, save at times when a hopeless or desponding emotion seized his mind. There was a very perceptible scar on one of the cheeks, where his face had been traversed by a bullet when leading on the 92nd at Egmont-op-Zee.

In his holsters he always carried the pistols given to him by the attainted Earl Marischal, when he was present, as a young subaltern of the 51st Foot, at the famous reviews of the Prussian army near Potsdam, together with a pocket edition of Horace bearing the Earl's autograph ; and these he valued highly as relics of that sturdy old Jacobite, once Scotland's premier peer.

Moore was now in his forty-eighth year, having been born at Glasgow, in 1761, in a house long known as “ Donald's Land,” in the Trongate—an edifice demolished in 1854. But to resume :—

After enjoying Quentin's confusion for a moment, he asked—

"Are there any other gentlemen volunteers serving with the Borderers?"

"No, sir, myself only."

"Indeed!—what—are you named Kennedy—Quentin Kennedy?"

"Yes, sir," replied Quentin, faintly, and his heart sunk. ("Oh," thought he, "he has heard of that accursed court-martial—who has not? It is all over with me now!")

"Have you not seen the last War Office Gazette, which came this morning from England?"

"No, sir, I am sorry to say that—that—" stammered Quentin, ignorant of what dereliction of duty might be here inferred; "I only—that is——"

"Then get a look of it, and there you will find yourself gazetted to a lieutenancy in the 7th, or Royal Fusiliers. I congratulate you, sir—your regiment is at present in England, where I wish we all were, with honour and safety."

Quentin was overwhelmed by this intimation.

"Oh, sir, are you sure of this?" exclaimed the poor lad, trembling with many mingled emotions.

"Sure as that I now address you; and if your name be Quentin Kennedy, serving with the King's Own Borderers—full lieutenant in the corps, which has *no other* subalterns. Now you cannot continue to serve thus—carrying a musket with the 25th; other work must be found for you. When will you be relieved from this post?"

"In a few minutes, sir—my hour is nearly up."



“Then you will take a note from me to Crawford, your colonel,” said Moore; and drawing forth a note book, he rapidly pencilled a note, tore it out, folded it and addressed it.

“The bearer hereof,” it ran, “Mr. Q. Kennedy, having been appointed by his Majesty to a lieutenancy in the 7th Fusiliers, will serve on my personal staff, as an extra aide-de-camp, until he can join his regiment, now in Britain.

“JOHN MOORE, Lieut.-Gen.”

“You will show this to Colonel Crawford and to the adjutant-general, with my compliments. It will be in orders to-morrow. Wyndham has gone to London with poor General Lefebre and the despatches of our cavalry affairs at Sahagun and Benevente, so I must have your assistance in his place during this *expedition*,” he added, smilingly, with an emphasis. “Captain Hardinge will lend you a horse—I know he has some spare cattle—meet me at my quarters opposite the cathedral to-morrow morning early; till then good-bye, Lieutenant Kennedy, and I wish you success!”

Moore drew off his glove, shook Quentin’s hand with friendly cordiality, and rode away at a canter, leaving our sentinel in a very bewildered state of mind indeed.



## CHAPTER XVI.

## PIQUE.

“ These hands are brown with toil ; that brow is scarred ;  
Still must you sweat and swelter in the sun,  
And trudge with feet benumbed the winter snow,  
Nor intermission have until the end.  
Thou canst not draw down fame upon thy head,  
And yet wouldst cling to life !”—ALEXANDER SMITH.

“ A LIEUTENANT in the 7th, or Royal Fusiliers !  
—am I actually so ? ” was the question Quentin  
asked of himself repeatedly.

There could be no doubt about it ; the general  
had said so, and the Gazette confirmed it, that  
he, Quentin Kennedy, volunteer with the 25th  
Foot, had been appointed to that regiment, one of  
the oldest corps of the line—a “ crack one,” too—  
commanded by General Sir Alured Clark, G.C.B.  
Long known as the *South British Fusiliers*, to  
distinguish them from the Scottish corps and  
the famous Welsh Fusiliers, armed with the same  
weapon, the 7th were without officers of the  
rank of ensign until a year or two ago ; thus, at  
the time we refer to, their two battalions had no  
less than sixty-four lieutenants.

This sudden promotion, which put him so com-

pletely beyond the power of his rival and enemy, the Master of Rohallion, and which gave him independence and a position in society too, puzzled Quentin for a time; but briefly so, as reflection showed him that he must owe it to the great interest possessed by Lord Rohallion, who, he was aware, had now traced him to the Borderers; and this, indeed, was the secret of the whole affair.

And Flora Warrender—she must have seen his appointment in the Gazette long before it had thus casually met the sharp eye of Sir John Moore, and could he doubt that she rejoiced at the event?

To be raised at once from a position so subordinate and anomalous, so unrecognised and so fraught with useless peril as that of a gentleman volunteer, from the ranks as it were of that army whose dreadful sufferings he shared and whose many dangers he risked—to be raised to the rank of an officer in a regiment so distinguished as the Royal Fusiliers, and to be at once, temporarily though it were, placed on the general's staff, and beyond the reach of Cosmo's coldness, pique, and hauteur, was indeed to be independent, and to taste of happiness supreme!

His heart was full of joy, of enthusiasm, and gratified ambition; but sincere gratitude and increased regard for the kind and fatherly old Lord to whom he owed it were not wanting now; and

Quentin resolved to write a letter pouring out his thanks, and expressive of all he felt, on the first opportunity. He was right to make the last reserve mentally, for opportunities for committing one's lucubrations to paper were sadly wanting now when within musket shot of the French advanced guard.

He was full of genuine regard for the good and great Sir John Moore, full of enthusiastic devotion, gratitude, and admiration, too! How was it possible that he could feel otherwise? Apart from the news of his promotion in life, which must soon have reached him, he blessed the chance which made his informant the resolute and gallant leader of the British army!

After obtaining the warm congratulations of those who were his friends, and who hailed him now as a brother officer (as for old Middleton he almost wept for joy, and swore to wet the new commission deeply), most grateful indeed to his heart were the humble but earnest felicitations of the soldiers, who crowded round him, poor fellows, all haggard, ragged, and starving though they were, begging leave to shake his hand, and to wish him all success and prosperity to the end of his days. And Quentin felt that such genuine and heartfelt wishes as theirs were well worth remembering as an incentive for the future.

But little time was there for joy or loitering

now, as the French were coming on and were again close at hand.

Relieved from the out-picquet on the Nogales road just as the winter dusk was deepening, he passed through the gloomy streets of Lugo, where ammunition waggons, unclaimed or abandoned baggage, and dead horses weltering in pools of dark blood, added greatly to the confusion of those crowded, ancient, narrow, and decidedly dirty thoroughfares; which were destitute alike of lamps, pavement, and police, and were full of holes, puddles, mud, and mire. There were sentinels, with bayonets fixed, at the doors of all the wine-shops and bodegas; yet crowds of famished soldiers loitered about them, while the dreaded provost-marshal guard, with cord and triangles, and patrols of horse and foot passed slowly to and fro in every direction, to enforce that order which the alcalde and his alguazils considered hopeless.

Quentin soon found, however, where the colonel and colours of the Borderers were lodged. It was an old mansion which had once belonged to the Knights of Santiago, the highest order of chivalry in Spain; and above its arched door, where two of the colonel's servants were chatting and smoking—one leisurely polishing a pair of hessian boots, and the other oiling the harness of his charger—he saw carved on a large marble block the badge of the order: a sword *gules*, the

hilt powdered with fleurs-de-lis, and the stern motto, *Sanguine Arabum*.

It happened, though seated over his wine, after such a dinner as the exigencies of the time enabled him to procure, and though in company with his old friend the gallant and fashionable Lord Paget, then in his fortieth year, rehearsing together their gay but somewhat coarse memories and experiences of Carlton House and the Pavilion, the Honourable Cosmo was far from being in the best of humours.

A full conviction of the sudden and disastrous turn in the prospects of the expedition—the army was now only fighting to escape home—together with the knowledge that on landing in England a horde of harpies—Jews, lawyers, and tipstaves, were all ready to pounce upon him, with protested bills, accounts, I. O. U.'s, post-obits, bonds, and Heaven only knows what more, the result of his Guards' life and reckless expenditure in London—all this, we say, well nigh drove him frantic; and Paget's memories of their brilliant past, and their wild, disreputable orgies with the Prince of Wales and his set, added stings to the terror with which he viewed the future.

Flora's fair acres might have stood in the gap between him and ruin, but fate and Quentin Kennedy ordained it should be otherwise.

"Egad, Paget, you see how it is; I've drained the paternal pump dry—there are bounds to

patience, and his lordship will not advance me another guinea beyond my allowance. Indeed, I could scarcely expect it; and thus, I *dare not* land in England!"

"Let us be afloat before we talk of landing," replied Paget; "it will be a deuced bad affair for us all if we don't find our transports in Vigo Bay; and, *entre nous*, I think Moore has some doubts about them."

"I don't care a straw if undistinguishable ruin should fall upon us all!"

"Which is certain to be the case, if the said transports are not there," replied the other, with a yawn. "But come, Crawford, fill your glass again; is this champagne some of the stuff we found in Colbert's baggage?"

"My fate will soon be decided," said the other, pursuing his own thoughts; "to-morrow, perhaps, for I can see some indication of taking up a position here, in front of Lugo."

"Yes; but the infernal miners failed at the bridges of the Minho, and the Sil—the river of gold."

"Thus, I say," continued Cosmo, doggedly, "Paget, old fellow, my fate will soon be decided!"

"And it is——"

"Death on a Spanish battle-field, or to rot in an English prison!"

"Don't talk so bitterly; once in London again, we shall see what can be done. Another glass of this sparkling liquid!—wine, wine, I say—



drown the blue devils in a red sea of it!" exclaimed the gay Paget.

"Something stronger than wine for me now," said Cosmo, as he filled a large glass nearly full with undiluted brandy, and drained it; "life is short, and not very merry here."

"Egad! I know no place, however, where it is so difficult to live and so easy to die."

"Right—so easy to die!" added Cosmo, with a strange and sickly smile.

It was at this inauspicious moment that a servant in uniform—liveries there were none then with the army—brought in Quentin's name.

"What the devil can this fellow possibly want with *me*?" said Cosmo, full of surprise at a circumstance so unusual as a visit from Quentin; "is he below?"

"Yes, sir."

"What does he wish?"

"To see you, sir," replied the soldier, with a second salute.

"Who is it?" drawled Paget, watching his cigar-smoke curling upward, and depositing the leg he was destined to leave at Waterloo on a spare chair.

"That fellow who was tried by a court-martial at Alva de Tormes."

"Tried—ah, I remember, for everything but high treason and housebreaking, eh?—ha! ha!"

"Yes; but who gave the charges the go-by at racing speed. Send him up!"

Quentin entered with a flush on his cheek and a painful beating in his heart. He bowed low to General Paget, whom he knew by sight, and to Cosmo, who responded by a quiet stare, and who, before he was addressed, said sharply—

“I generally have my eye on *you*, sir, and I thought that you were with the outlying picquets in front of the town?”

“I was, Colonel Crawford ; but——”

“*Was*—and how does it come to pass that you are relieved, or here at this time?” asked Cosmo, loftily.

“Because, sir, I am now Lieutenant Kennedy, of the 7th Fusiliers, serving on the personal staff of Sir John Moore.”

On hearing this Paget raised his eyebrows and smiled ; but Cosmo hastily thrust his gold glass into his right eye, and glared at Quentin through it as he wheeled his chair half round, and surveyed him with cool insolence from head to foot.

“Are you mad, fellow ?” he asked, quietly but earnestly.

“Less so than you, Colonel Crawford,” replied Quentin, with suppressed passion ; “I have here to show you a note from the general.”

“To show *me* ?”

“Yes, sir ; because it goes from you direct to the adjutant-general for insertion in orders.”

Cosmo coughed, and very leisurely opened the little note which Quentin handed to him.

“So, sir,” said he, “so far as this scrap of

paper imports—and I know Moore's writing well—he has appointed you an extra aide-de-camp?"

"He has done me the honour, Colonel Crawford."

"Your health, sir," said Lord Paget, frankly; "I congratulate you—wont you drink?"

"You might more usefully fill up the time necessary to qualify you for a staff appointment by serving with some corps of the army."

"The 25th, perhaps?" said Quentin, whose temper Cosmo's cutting coldness was rapidly bringing to a white heat.

"No, sir," he replied, with one of his insolent smiles, "I did not mean our friends the Borderers."

"What corps, then?"

"The Belem Rangers; what do you think of them?"

"Crawford!" exclaimed Lord Paget, starting with astonishment, for this imaginary corps was our general Peninsular term for all skulkers, malingerers, and others who showed the white feather, by loitering in the great hospital of Belem, near Lisbon.

Quentin felt all that the studied insult implied; the blood rushed back upon his aching heart, and he grew very pale. The conviction now that his position was *different*, that Cosmo wished by deliberate insolence to provoke and destroy him, rushed upon his mind, and gave him coolness and reflection, so he said, quietly—

"I shall not report your kind suggestion to Sir John Moore; but I presume I may now withdraw?"

"Sir," resumed Cosmo, starting from his chair pale with passion, as he seemed now to have a legitimate and helpless object on which to wreak his bitterness of soul—a bitterness all the deeper that it was now inflamed by wine—"sir, I refer to General Lord Paget if your bearing has not something of a mutinous sneer in it?"

"My smile might, Colonel Crawford; but not bearing, be assured of that."

"Sir, what the devil do you mean? Is it to bandy words with me? You hear him, Paget?" said Cosmo, incoherently, and purple alike with fury and a sense of shame at the exhibition he was making; "you hear him?"

"I have no intention of insulting you," urged Quentin, anxious only to begone.

"Insults are never suspected by me, but when I know they are intended, as I feel they are *now*. Even your presence here is an insult! Now, sir, do you understand me, and your resource—your resource—do you understand *that*—eh?"

"For God's sake, Crawford! are you mad?" interposed Lord Paget; "what the devil is up between you?"

"More than I can tell you, Paget."

"With this mere lad, and you a man of the world!"

"'Sblood! Yes, with him."

The Master's mad pride had involved him in many quarrels, and he had paraded more than one man at the back of Montague House, in London, in the Duke's Walk at Holyrood, and elsewhere—luckless fellows who had resented his overbearing disposition—so a duel to him was nothing, and in his baffled pique and ungovernable fury he was now wicked enough to aim at one.

“Cosmo Crawford,” exclaimed Quentin, his dark eyes flashing through the moisture that filled them, “Master of Rohallion,” he added in a choking voice, “I have too often, as a child, slept on your good old mother's breast to level a pistol at yours, else, sir—else——”

“Bah!” shouted Cosmo, turning on his heel; “I thought so. Belem for ever!”

“To-morrow we may be engaged with the enemy,” said Quentin, in the same broken voice; “I shall be in the field, and mounted too; then let us see whether you or I ride closest to the bayonets of the French!”

“Agreed—agreed!” said Cosmo, with stern energy, as his pale eyes, that shrunk and dilated, filled with more than usual of their old baleful gleam, and he wrung with savage energy the proffered hand of Quentin, who hastened away.

“By Jove,” said Paget, laughing, as he filled his glass with champagne, “this same beats cock-fighting! But what the devil is it all about?”

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE COMBAT OF LUGO.

“New clamours and new clangours now arise,  
The sound of trumpets mixed with fighting cries,  
With frenzy seized, I run to meet th’ alarms,  
Resolved on death, resolved to die in arms.  
But first to gather friends, with them t’ oppose,  
If fortune favoured, and repel the foes—  
Spurred by my courage—by my country fired,  
With sense of honour and revenge inspired!”

*Æneis* ii.

“WHATEVER may be their misery,” says General Napier, “soldiers will always be found clean at a review and ready at a fight.” The order to take up a position and form line of battle in front of Lugo had scarcely been issued, when a change came over the bearing, aspect, and emotions of the men. Pale, weary, and exhausted though they were, vigour and discipline were restored to the ranks, with confidence and valour!

The stragglers came hurrying in to rejoin the regiments, that they might share in the battle which was to give them vengeance for the past, or, it might be, a last relief for the future. Three fresh battalions, left by Sir David Baird in his



advance to Astorga, had joined Sir John Moore in rear of Villa Franca, and thus, at Lugo, he found himself at the head of nineteen thousand hardy and well-tried men.

Moore's generous kindness to Quentin on this occasion served completely to obliterate the affair of the preceding evening. He soon procured him a horse, and pleased with the modest bearing, the grateful and earnest desire to serve and deserve, with the enthusiasm of the young subaltern, he presented him with the sword of General Colbert, a French officer, (said to be of Scottish descent,) who had been shot by a rifleman of the 95th at Cazabelos, on the 3rd of January.

"Take this sabre," said he, "and preserve it alike as the present of a friend and the weapon of one of France's bravest soldiers. The hilt is plain enough; and as for the blade, let the enemy be the best judges of *that*. Follow me now to the lines."

That sabre Quentin resolved to treasure, even as he treasured the ring of Flora Warrender.

Grey day was breaking now, and at that dread time when the troops were forming, and the morning gun pealed from the old walls of Lugo—the early hour of a chill winter morning—he knew that she who loved him so well, all unconscious of his danger, the beloved of his heart, was lying calmly in her bed at home, asleep, perhaps with a smile upon her lips, while he was

here, far away, face to face and front to front with Death!

He rode forth with Stanhope, Burrard, Harding, Grahame of Lynedoch (the future hero of Barossa), and others of Moore's brilliant staff, his young heart beating high with pride and joy, as well it might with such companions and on such an auspicious day.

"On this ground, gentlemen, unless the enemy advance in great strength," said Moore, "I shall only be too happy to meet them."

As Quentin passed the 25th moving into position in close column of subdivisions, many a hand grasped his in hearty greeting, and many a cap was waved, for the eyes of the whole corps were on him.

"'Tis well," said Moore; "I like that spirit much! They seem proud of you, Kennedy, as one of their corps. Pass the orders, gentlemen, to the generals of division and brigade to prepare for action."

The staff separated at a gallop.

"Off with the hammer-stalls," was now the command; "uncase colours—examine flints, priming, and ammunition."

About mid-day, after standing for some hours under arms with their colours flying and exposed to a keen and biting wind, the British saw the dark masses of the French appear. There was no sun shining; thus no burnished steel flashed

from amid their sombre ranks, which numbered seventeen thousand infantry and four thousand horse, with fifty guns; and now, all soaked with a drenching rain overnight, they were deploying into line, while many other columns were pouring forward in their rear.

Moore's right, chiefly composed of the Guards, was posted on flat and open ground, flanked by a bend of the Minho. His centre was among vineyards and low stone walls. His left was somewhat thrown back, resting on the mountains and supported by cavalry.

It was his intention to engage deeply with his right and centre and bear the enemy on, before he closed up with the left wing, in which he placed the flower of his troops, including the Highland Regiments, hoping thus to bring on a decisive battle, and have the French so handled by the bayonet that he might continue the remainder of the retreat unmolested.

Further hope than this, alas! he had none.

As the French deployed along the mountain ridge in front of Lugo, they could not see distinctly either the strength or position of the British; so Soult advanced with four field guns and some squadrons of horse under Colonel Lallemand, to feel the way and throw a few shot at the vineyard walls on speculation.

"Bah! M. le Maréchal," said Colonel Lallemand, confidently; "they are all fled, those pesti-

lent English, or 'tis only a rear-guard we have here."

"I suspect, M. le Colonel, you will find something more than a rear-guard," replied Soult, as fifteen white puffs of smoke rose up from the low walls in front, and a dozen or so round cannon-shot came crashing among their gun-carriages, dismounting two twelve-pounders and smashing the wheel of a third.

On this Soult drew back his squadrons and made a feint on the right, while sending a strong column and five guns against the left, where these fresh regiments were posted.

Coming on with wild halloos, and not a few of them chanting the "*Carmagnole*," the French drove in the line of skirmishers, when Moore, followed now only by Quentin Kennedy, all the rest of his staff being elsewhere, came galloping along and called upon the left to "*advance*."

They were now fairly under fire and fast closing up. How different from such work in the present day! *Now* we may open a destructive fusillade at a thousand yards rifle-range, and so fire on for hours; then, after coming within range with Brown Bess, scarcely three rounds would be fired, before British and foreign pluck were tested by the bayonet.

Perceiving that the skirmishers of the Borderers were also falling back before a peppery cloud of little *voltigeurs* in light green;

"Mr. Kennedy," said Moore, "ride to the Honourable Colonel Crawford—tell him to advance at once in line ; I will lead on the regiments here."

Quentin, who was tolerably well mounted, dashed up to where Cosmo, cold and stern as ever, sat on his horse at the head of the regiment.

"Colonel Crawford," said he, with a profound salute, "it is Sir John Moore's order that you advance with the bayonet—the whole left wing is to be thrown forward."

Cosmo's eyes flashed and dilated with anger at having to take an order from Quentin ; he frowned and lingered.

"Did you hear me, Colonel Crawford—that your battalion is to charge?"

"Orders, and from *you*?" said Cosmo, grinding his teeth.

"From Sir John Moore," urged Quentin, breathlessly.

Now there is at times a wild impulse which seizes the heart of man and will make him set, it may be, the fate of all his future—it may be life itself, upon the issue of a single chance ; and such a daring impulse now fired the soul of Quentin.

"Twenty-fifth," he exclaimed, brandishing his sabre, "you are to advance—prepare to charge."

"Dare you give orders here?" cried Cosmo, hoarse with passion, and scarcely knowing what he said ; "I follow none—let all who dare follow me. Rohallion leads, but follows none."

“Come on then *together*.”

“Forward — double quick — charge !” they cried together with their horses neck and neck rushing onward, while the battalion, with a loud hurrah, fell upon the enemy, bayoneting the skirmishers and closing on the main body.

“Bravo, Kennedy !” cried old Middleton, waving his rusty sabre ; “I wish Dick Warriston was here to see you to-day. It’s a proud man he’d be, for dearly he loved you, lad. Whoop ! here we are right on the top of the vagabonds,” he added, as the front rank of a sallow-visaged, grimly-bearded, grey-coated French column broke in disorder and gave way before the furious advance of the Borderers, whose two field officers were at that moment unhorsed.

Middleton’s charger received a ball in its counter and he had a narrow escape from another, which buried itself in a great old silver hunting-watch which he wore in his fob, and was known as the “regimental clock.” Quentin perceived him scrambling up, however, unhurt, just as he had hurried to the assistance of Cosmo, who, some twenty yards in front of the corps, had been knocked from his saddle in the *mêlée* by two Frenchmen, who had their muskets withdrawn, bayonets fixed, and butts upwards, to pin him to the earth on which he lay helpless.

Dashing spurs into his horse, Quentin rushed upon one, and rode him right down, at the same



moment burying his sabre in the body of the other. The first voltigeur was only stunned ; but the second fell, wallowing in blood.

Quentin dragged Cosmo up, and assisted him to remount.

"I thank Heaven, sir," said he ; "I was just in time to save your life."

"From any other hands than yours it had been welcome," said he, haughtily ; "however, I thank you. Sound, bugler, to halt, and re-form on the colours!"

As Quentin rode away, the proud consciousness in his heart, that he had returned great good for great evil, gave place to another. He saw the second Frenchman rolling in blood on the ground, and clutching the grass in his agony. Then a sensation of deadly sickness came over his destroyer's heart—a sensation that he could neither analyse nor describe. So he spurred madly toward the extreme left, where Sir John Moore by accident found himself in front of his old regiment, the 51st, in which he had served as ensign.

With a voice and face alike expressive of animation, he waved his cocked-hat and called upon them as his old comrades to advance to the charge. At that moment the light company of the 76th set the example, and the whole left wing rushed furiously on the French with the bayonet. There was a dreadful yell and shock ; scores of men tumbled over each other, many never to

rise again; the butt-end was freely used, and in a minute or less, the French attack was routed, leaving four hundred dead, dotting all the slope.

In the front rank of the 51st, Brigade-Major David Roberts engaged a French officer hand to hand and slew him; but the major's sword-arm was shattered by two bullets fired by two French soldiers, who were instantly bayoneted by an Irishman of the 51st, named Connor. He killed a few more, while his hand was in, for which he was promoted on the spot.

After this Soult made no further attack, and thus it became apparent to Moore, that the wary and skilful old veteran was only waiting until Laborde's division, which was in the rear, should come up, together with a portion of the sixth corps, which was marching by the way of Val des Orres.

All the next day the two armies remained embattled in sight of each other, almost without firing a shot—Soult waiting and Moore watching—the foe coming on hourly in fresh force, till “the darkness fell, and with it the English general's hope to engage his enemy on equal terms.”

Quentin spent the evening of that anxious day in the bivouac of his old friends the Borderers, who were sharing as usual the contents of their havresacks and canteens, and congratulating each other on escapes, for save a few contusions none had been hit, and none were absent save Monkton, who was stationed with a picquet of twenty men

at the bend of the Minho. Before and after an action, there is an effect that remains for a time on the minds and manner of both officers and men. The former show more kindness and suavity to the latter, and generally the latter to each other. There is more kindness, less silly banter, more quietness and seriousness, and the oath is seldom heard, even on the tongue of a fool. It may be, that all have felt eternity nearer them than usual, and yet in time of war, the soldier is face to face with it daily.

Large fires were lighted all along the British line, and in their glare, the piles of arms were seen to flash and glitter, while for warmth, the weary soldiers lay beside them in close ranks on the damp earth.

"A plucky thing that was of yours to-day, Kennedy," said Middleton, "sabreing the voltigeur and remounting the colonel. You left *me*, your old friend, to shift for myself, however."

"I saw you were in no danger, major," said Quentin, with some confusion; "and being independent now of Crawford, I wished—I wished——"

"To heap ashes on his head; I fear I am not generous enough to have acted as you did, and marred a step in the regiment."

"A shot grazed my cap *here*," said a captain named Drummond; "another inch, and there had been a company vacant."

"I wonder what the devil Moore is loitering here for?" asked some one.

"Kennedy's on the staff now ; he ought to know the secrets of the bureau," said Colville.

"Has anything oozed out, Quentin?" asked Askerne.

"He can tell us that we'll attack the French position about daybreak, before Loison, Laborde, or Ney can join," said Colyear, laughing.

"Ney is at Villa Franca," added Captain Winton, a grave and thoughtful officer (who fought a duel at Merida). "I suspect Moore remains here, in expectation of being attacked *before* these reinforcements come up."

"Now would be the time to fall back in the night towards Vigo, and take up a position to cover the embarkation," said Askerne.

"Right, Rowland," responded Quentin ; "we are only able to fight one battle, and desperation will make us do so well. And it is not meant that after winning a battle we should enter Castile again with a handful of jaded men, and not an ally to aid us between Corunna and the ridges of the Sierra Morena. I heard Moore himself say this."

"Who comes here?" they heard a sentinel challenge at a distance.

"What comes here would be more grammatical, my friend," replied a dolorous voice which they knew, as four soldiers appeared, half supporting and half carrying an officer.

"What is all that?" asked Middleton.

"The mangled remains of William Monkton, esquire, lieutenant, 25th Foot," replied that personage, as the soldiers laid him on the turf near the watchfire.

"What is the matter, Willie? are you wounded?" asked Askerne, putting a canteen of grog to the sufferer's mouth.

"I should think so! a devil of a runaway horse from the enemy's lines came smash over me. I say, Doctor Salts-and-senna," he added to the assistant surgeon, who had joined the group; "I am not past your skill, I hope?"

"Why, Monkton, you haven't even a bone broken," said the doctor, half angrily, as he rapidly felt him all over; "you are sadly bruised, though, and will have to ride, if we continue the retreat."

At that moment Hardinge galloped up to Cosmo, who was sitting on a fallen tree, cloaked and alone, near his horse, for his officers seldom cared to join him, or he to join them.

"Colonel Crawford," said he, hurriedly, but loud enough to be heard by all, "the whole line is to fall instantly back towards Corunna by a forced night march. All the fires are to be kept brightly burning to deceive the enemy, and all movements will be made left about, to prevent the clashing of the pouches being heard. Move in silence, as we must completely mask our retreat. Mr. Kennedy, you will be so good as

take these orders without delay along the line, and desire the 51st, the 76th, and the cavalry of the left flank, to fall back and be off, without sound of bugle. Thirty-five miles in our rear, the bridge of Betanzos is being undermined ; that point once passed, and the bridge blown up, we shall be safe !”

It was indeed time to fall back. Soult’s first reinforcements had come up in overwhelming force, and in the stores of Lugo there was not bread for *one* more day’s subsistence. The troops were exhorted by Moore to keep order and “ to make a great exertion, which he trusted would be the *last* required of them.”

At ten o’clock the march began.

In rear of the position the country was encumbered by intricate lanes and stone walls ; but officers who had examined all the avenues were selected to guide the columns, and just as a dreadful storm of wind and rain, mixed with icy sleet, burst forth upon that devoted army, the rearward march began, and when the dull January morning stole slowly in, save a few wretched, barefooted, and worn-out stragglers, nothing remained of the British position in front of Lugo but the drenched and soddened dead bodies of those who had fallen in the conflict, and the smouldering ashes of the long line of watch-fires, that extended from the mountains towards the bend of the Minho.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

## A WARNING.

"Soft; I did but dream.

O, coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!  
The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight,  
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.  
What do I fear? Myself? there's none else by."

*Richard III.*

SIR JOHN MOORE and General Paget, with the cavalry, covered the retreat; the former ordered several small bridges to be destroyed to check the enemy's advance; but such was the inefficiency of the engineer force, that in every instance the mines *failed*. The rain, the wind, and the sleet continued; more soldiers perished by the way, and more stragglers were taken or sabred by the enemy's light horse; then again demoralization and despair pervaded the ranks. So numerous did the stragglers of all corps become, that more than once they found themselves strong enough to face about and check the cavalry of Lallemand and Ribeaupierre. The Guards, Artillery, and Highlanders alone preserved their discipline.

So great was the fatigue endured by the troops,

that, on the evening of the 10th, when the 3rd battalion of the Royal Scots entered Betanzos, it mustered, under the colours, nine officers, three sergeants, and *three* privates; "all the rest had dropped on the roads, and many did not rejoin for three days."

At this place, which is a village at the foot of a hill, where the Mandeo was crossed by a wooden bridge, on which the engineers were hard at work, they were attacked by Ribeaupierre's dragoons, who, however, were repulsed by the 28th Regiment; the bridge was destroyed, and its beams and planks hurled into the swollen stream, which swept them away to the Gulf of Ferrol.

And here a party of straggling invalids, exhausted by fatigue, were closely pressed by the French cavalry; a Sergeant Newman, of the 2nd battalion of the 43rd, who was himself nearly worn out, rallied them with his pike, and gradually collected four hundred men of all regiments. With great presence of mind, he formed those poor fellows into subdivisions, and made them fire and retire by sections, each re-forming in rear of the others, so that he most effectually covered the retreat of the disabled men who covered all that fearful road—conduct so spirited that he was publicly thanked by Generals Fraser and Fane.

The destruction of the bridge more decidedly secured the retreat; but more men perished between Betanzos and Lugo than anywhere else,

since that rearward march began. Moore, by his energy, massed the army, now reduced to fourteen thousand infantry, which, on the morning of the 11th January, fell back on Corunna, under his immediate and personal superintendence.

" Stanhope," said he to his favourite aide-de-camp, who was almost ever by his side, " we are now within a few miles of Corunna ; ride forward with me, as I am all anxiety to see if our fleet is in the bay—Kennedy will accompany us."

Quentin bowed, put spurs to his horse, and quitting Paget's cavalry rearguard together, they rode rapidly along the line of march to the front.

They soon reached the heights of Corunna, and saw the town beneath them about four miles distant ; then a sad expression stole over Moore's handsome face, but no exclamation escaped him.

Not a ship was visible in the Bays of Orsan or Betanzos, nor in the harbour of the town ; the Roads of Ferrol and all the expanse of water were open and empty !

Fortune was against him and his army, for contrary winds detained the fleet of men-of-war and transports at Vigo, a hundred and twenty miles distant by sea.

The morning was sunny, and Corunna on its fortified peninsula—the *Corun*, or " tongue of land " of the Celts—was seen distinctly, with all its strong bastions and gothic spires ; its almost land-locked harbour, guarded by the castles of

San Martino and Santa Cruz, with the flag of King Ferdinand VII. flying on the fort of San Antonio (which crowns a high and insular rock), and on the Pharos of Hercules.

For Sir John Moore there was nothing left now but to prepare to defend the position in front of the town till the fleet should come round. He quartered his army in Corunna and its suburbs; the reserve he posted at El Burgo, on the river Mero, the bridge of which he destroyed.

He also sent an engineer officer with a party of sappers to blow up the bridge of Cambria. Some delay took place in the ignition of the mine, and he despatched Quentin Kennedy to the officer with an angry expostulation.

Mortified by repeated failures elsewhere during the retreat, the officer was anxious to perform this duty effectually. He approached the mine to examine it, and at that moment it exploded!

Quentin felt the earth shake beneath his feet; the arch of the bridge sprung upward like a huge lid; a column of dark earth, stones, and dust, spouted into the air to descend in ruins, bringing with them the mutilated fragments of the poor engineer officer, who was literally blown to pieces; but this was a mere squib when compared with the explosion of two magazines containing four thousand casks of powder, which were blown up on the 13th, to prevent them from falling into the hands of the enemy. On

this occasion, says an eye-witness, "there ensued a crash like the bursting forth of a volcano; the earth trembled for miles, the rocks were torn from their bases, and the agitated waters rolled the vessels as in a storm; a vast column of smoke and dust, shooting out fiery sparks from its sides, arose perpendicularly and slowly to a great height, and then a shower of stones and fragments of all kinds bursting out of it with a roaring sound, killed several persons who remained too near the spot. A stillness, only interrupted by the lashing of the waves on the shore, succeeded, and the business of the war went on."

All this powder had been sent from England and left there, by the red-tapists of the time, to be destroyed thus, while more than once the armies of Britain and Spain had been before the enemy with their pouches empty!

In Corunna, the jaded British had now breathing time, but the exulting French were still pouring on. Some of Moore's staff suggested that he should send a flag of truce to Soult and negotiate for permission to embark unmolested—a suggestion which his undaunted heart rejected with scorn and anger.

"I rely on my own powers," said he, "for defeating the enemy, and extricating with honour my troops from their perilous position."

Food, shelter, and rest restored vigour, and force of habit brought discipline back to the ranks;

fresh ammunition was served out, and in many instances the men were supplied with new firelocks in lieu of those rusted and worn by the weather during the retreat; but hearty were the cheers that rung in Corunna when, on the evening of the 14th, the fleet of transports from Vigo were seen bearing slowly into the harbour, under full sail, and coming each in succession to anchor. At the same time, however, an orderly, sent by Sir David Baird, came spurring in hot haste to announce that the French had repaired the bridge of El Burgo, and that their cavalry and artillery were crossing the Mero, a few miles from Corunna.

With the rest of the staff, Quentin passed all that night in his saddle, riding between the town and beach with orders and instructions, for, under cover of the friendly darkness, the whole of the women and children, sick and wounded, dismounted dragoons, all the best horses—the useless were shot on the beach—and fifty-two pieces of cannon were embarked; eleven six-pounders and one field howitzer being only retained for immediate service.

“Hardinge,” said Moore, as his staff rode into the upper town, “you will ride over to Sir David Baird; you, Major Colborne, to Lord Paget; and you, Kennedy, to General Leith, to say, that at daybreak, *if the French do not move*, they are to fall back with their corps for instant embarkation.”



And with these welcome orders, the three aides-de-camp separated at full speed.

On this night of anxiety and bustle, the Master of Rohallion remained idly in his billet, a pretty villa, the windows of which faced the little bay of Orsan, with the suburb of the Pescadera extending from its garden on the west towards the mainland.

Paget and some other friends of his, after seeing their sound horses embarked and the useless shot, had supped with him. No one expected any engagement to take place now; they made light of past sorrows, spoke laughingly of the amusements that awaited them at home, and drank deeply.

Any momentary emotion of gratitude felt by Cosmo for the noble manner in which young Kennedy saved his life at Lugo was completely forgotten now, all the recollection of that event being completely merged in a whirlwind of rage at the aide-de-camp for having taunted him to the charge, and for actually daring to lead on the battalion in the face of so many superior officers!

Cosmo had never wearied of descanting on this military enormity, and all night long, as he became inflamed by what he imbibed, he consulted with Paget, Burrard, and others, as to whether he should call Kennedy out or bring him before a court-martial again.

The former mode of proceeding at Alva having

failed "to smash him," they were averse to another, and all were of opinion that for the latter course Cosmo had allowed too many days to elapse.

"Trouble your head no more about it," said Paget, while playing with the tassels of his gold sash; "we'll laugh the affair over at Brighton in a few days or so. Soothe your mind, meantime, by the study of these classic frescoes. I wonder who the devil decorated this villa!"

"Cupid and Psyche," said Burrard, who had been adding a few decorations, such as beards and tails, with a burnt cork; "Pyramus and Thisbe; and, by Jove, the story of Leda!"

"Egad! such lively imaginations and odd propensities those pagan fellows had! *Au revoir*, Crawford; we'll have the générale beaten for the last time on Spanish ground to-morrow, and then hey for the high road to Old England!" added the gay hussar, who, before six months were past, figured in an elopement, a duel, and damages to the tune of twenty thousand pounds—an affair that made more noise in the world of fashion than even the Spanish campaign.

Cosmo was at last alone, and though he mixed a glass of brandy with a goblet of champagne, he felt strange and sad thoughts stealing over him.

He was hot and flushed, and his heart beat tumultuously and anxiously, he knew not why. He threw open the sash of one of the lofty

windows, which were divided in lattice-fashion from the ceiling to the floor, and looked out upon the night.

It was silent, clear, and starry, and not a sound broke the calm stillness, save the chafing of the waves on the rocks that bordered the bay.

The snow had melted, and the garden of the villa being thickly planted with evergreens, looked quite unlike a winter one.

Cosmo's brain, at least his whole nervous system, seemed to have received a shock by that fall from his horse at Lugo. He was restless, feverish, and anxious, without knowing why; for being brave as man could be, he had no fear for the morrow, and really cared very little whether a battle was fought or not.

"What is this that is stealing over me—can it be illness?" he asked of himself.

Thoughts and memories of home, his family, and many an old and once tender association that he had long forgotten were stealing over him now, together with an uncontrollable sadness and depression of mind: his father's cheerful voice, his mother's loving face, came vividly to recollection, with emotions of tenderness for which he could not account—emotions which he strove to repress as unnatural to him, and which actually provoked him, by the strange pertinacity with which they thrust themselves upon his fancy.

"Pshaw!" said he, "that deuced tumble in front

of the enemy has unmanned me—and that fellow, too! Confound him,” he muttered through his clenched teeth, “I hate him!”

At that moment the great bell of the citadel tolled the hour of three. He arose and stepped out into the garden. The last note of that deep and full but distant bell, yet vibrated in the stilly air; the stars were reflected in the dark waters of the bay, and the light that shone in the great Pharos of Hercules, three hundred feet above it, as it revolved slowly on its ancient tower, cast tremulous rays at regular intervals far across the sea on one side and the inlet of Orsan on the other.

The ocean breeze came gratefully to the flushed brow of Cosmo, who suddenly perceived near him a man in a strange uniform.

He stood in the centre of the garden walk at a short distance from the open window, his figure being clearly defined against the starry sky beyond, and by a ray of light which shone from the room Cosmo could perceive that his dress was scarlet.

Supposing he was some straggler or other man who should be in quarters, Crawford, whose step was somewhat unsteady, walked boldly up to the tall stranger, who remained silent and immovable.

He wore an old-fashioned flowing red coat without a collar, but having deep cuffs, all pro-

fusely laced; a large brigadier wig and three-cornered hat, sleeve ruffles, and a long slender sword, and he stood with his right hand firmly planted on a walking cane. His bearing was noble and lofty; his long, pale, and handsome features, in which Cosmo recognised a startling likeness of *his own*, wore a deathlike hue, and his eyes were sad and stony in expression.

Cosmo Crawford attempted to speak, but the words failed on his lips; he felt the hair bristle on his scalp, and a thrill of terror pass all over him as the figure, phantom, fancy, or whatever it was, pointed with its thin white hand to *the plain before Corunna*, and then the whole outline began to fade, the stars shone through it, and it seemed to melt away into space!

An icy horror came over Cosmo, and his soul trembled as he remembered the bugbear of his boyhood, the story of the haunted gate at Rohal-lion, and the wraith of his uncle John the Master, who had been slain by the side of Cornwallis in America. He rushed back to the room and flung himself panting on a sofa.

Then with a furious oath at his own timidity, folly, or fancy, he issued boldly into the garden again, but nothing was there save the laurel bushes that bordered the lonely walk where he had seen that wondrous and fantastic dream.

All seemed still—horribly so—all save the beating of his heart and the rustling of the regi-

mental colours, which the night wind stirred, and which, in virtue of his rank, were always lodged in his apartment.

“*Was that a warning?*—bah! And the cup of wine!” he exclaimed. “By this time to-morrow night,” he reflected, “I may have been again in battle. I may be safe and scatheless, or dreadfully mutilated and beggared for life, or by this hour—dreadful thought, I may be in eternity! I may have learned the secret of life and death, of existence and extinction, and this body may be lying stark, stripped, and bloody, with its glazed eyes fixed on the stars of heaven! Bah! another glass of wine, then!”

Cosmo slept but little that night, and it was with a stern and gloomy foreboding of evil that he saw the day dawn stealing over the dark grey sea and the lofty citadel of Corunna.



## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE BATTLE OF CORUNNA.

“Marked you yon moving mass, the dark array  
Of yon deep column wind its sullen way?  
Low o’er its barded brow, the plumed boast,  
Glittering and gay, of France’s wayward host,  
With gallant bearing wings its venturous flight,  
Cowers o’er its kindred bands, and waves them to the fight.”

LORD GRENVILLE.

THE army was now rid of every incumbrance, and all was prepared for the withdrawal of the fighting men as soon as darkness should again set in, and four o’clock in the afternoon of the 16th was the time fixed by Moore for doing so; but lo! at two o’clock on that anxious day a messenger came from Sir John Hope to state that the whole French army, then in position on the heights above Corunna, was getting under arms—that a general movement was taking place along the entire line, twenty thousand strong!

“Stand to your arms—unpile, unpile!” was the cry from right to left.

Long ere this, the whole British army had been in position.

Sir David Baird held the right with his divi-

sion, while Sir John Hope's was formed across the main road, with its left towards the Mero river; but the whole of this combined line was exposed to, and almost enfiladed by, a brigade of French guns posted on the rocks above the little village of Elvina.

Fraser's division remained before the gates of Corunna to watch the coast road, and be prepared to advance on any point.

But all the advantage, in strength of position, of horse, foot, and artillery, was in favour of the enemy. The only cavalry in the field with Moore were *forty* troopers of the 15th Hussars, under the command of a lieutenant named Knight.

Opposed to Hope and Baird's slender line were the heavy divisions of Delaborde, Merle, and Merniet, while the cavalry of the French left, under De Lahausaye, Lorge, Franceschi, Ribeaupierre, and others, were thrown forward, almost in echelon and in heavy columns, along the whole British right, hemming them in between the Mero and the harbour of Corunna, and menacing even the rear so far as San Cristoval, a mile beyond Sir David Baird, whom, however, Fraser and Lord Paget covered.

Joy sparkled in Moore's eyes as he rode along the line at the head of his staff, and to Colonel Graham of Balgowan he expressed his regret that "the lateness of the hour and the shortness of the evening would prevent them from profiting by the victory which he confidently anticipated."

The afternoon was dull and sunless; grey clouds covered all the louring sky; the sea towards the offing looked black and stormy, and the ramparts of Corunna, washed by the white waves from the west, seemed hard, sombre, and gloomy; but the British were in high spirits and full of hope at the prospect of giving a graceful and a glorious close to this inauspicious campaign.

Through Moore's telescope, which he lent him, Quentin swept the French lines. He could see the masses of the Old Guard in their tall grenadier caps, grey great-coats and enormous scarlet epaulettes; then the ordinary infantry of the line, in their short-waisted blue coatees and wide scarlet trousers, advancing in three dense columns along the heights towards the British position. He could see the guns being unlimbered and prepared for service on the ridge of rock that covered the flank of the infantry; and he could also see the cavalry of the left; the cuirassiers of Lahausaye in helmets and corslets of brass, with flowing scarlet plumes and straight swords of great length; the chasseurs of Lorge and Ribeaupierre, in light green, with their horse-hair plumes all floating like a sea of red and white; then the picturesque column of Franceschi, in which were a corps of Polish lancers, with all their tricoloured bannerols fluttering; and some of the Mamelukes of the Imperial Guard, with white turbans and crosses of gold, all brandishing their crooked sabres and

loading the heavy air with uncouth and tumultuous cries.

On the other hand were the cool and silent British infantry; steady and still they stood in their solid ranks, their arms loaded, primed, and "ordered," the bayonets fixed and colours flying; and no sound was heard along all their line, save when the pipers of the Black Watch, the 92nd, or some other Scottish regiment, played loud, in defiance of the advancing foe, some historical or traditionary air of the clan or tribe from whence its name was taken or its ranks were filled.

To the 42nd, with the 4th and 50th, was entrusted the defence of the extreme right, the weakest point of the line, and on *their maintenance of which* the safety and honour of the army rested.

As Quentin passed his old battalion in Hope's division on the road that led from Aris to Corunna, he saluted Cosmo, but received no response. Grim as Ajax, the Master was advancing with his eyes fixed on the enemy and his left hand clutching his gathered reins. At that moment perhaps, he thought less of the horrid dream of yesternight—for a dream he assuredly deemed it—than of the ruinous bonds, the crushing mortgages, the post-obits, and secret loans at fifty and sixty per cent., that a French bullet might that day close, together with his own existence, and he actually felt a species of grim satisfaction

that thereby the crew of money-lenders would be outwitted.

"This is a day that will live in history, major," said Quentin, as he passed jolly old Middleton, in rear of the corps, trotting his barrel-bellied cob, an animal of grave and solemn deportment.

"Likely enough, lad," replied the other; "but I've seen too many of these historical days now, and I would sell cheaply alike my share in them, with the chance of being honourably mentioned by some future Hume or Smollett."

"So, Monkton, you've recovered your Lugo mishap."

"Quite, Kennedy," replied that individual, whom he overtook marching on the left flank of his company; "never felt jollier in my life—breakfasted about twelve to-day with Middleton and Colville on mulled claret dashed with old brandy. So we are going to engage at last! Well, I hope we shall polish off old Johnny Soult, and get on board betimes—then ho, for Old England!"

"There, gentlemen, is the first gun!" exclaimed Rowland Askerne, with his eyes full of animation, as he pointed with his sword to a field-piece that flashed on the rocks above Elvina. Then a 12-pound shot hummed harmlessly through the air along the whole line of Baird's division.

"Tyrol, tra la, la lira!" sang the reckless Monkton; "this begins the game in earnest!"

"At such a time how *can* you be so thoughtless, Willie?" said Askerne, with some asperity; and now, from the great French battery on the rocks, the shot and shell fell thick and fast upon the British line, while, led by the Duke of Dalmatia in person, the three solid columns of Delaborde, Neale, and Merniet, descended with yells to the assault, tricolours waving, swords flashing, and eagles brandished.

A cloud of skirmishers preceded them, and the white puffs of smoke that spirted from among the underwood, the low dykes, hedgerows and laurel bushes, marked where they nestled and took quiet "pot shots" at the old 95th, and other British sharpshooters, who fell back in disorder, as the light six-pounders failed to protect them against the French heavy guns, which swept Moore's line to the centre, with round shot, grape, and canister.

From his master in the art of war, Sir Ralph Abercrombie, Moore had learned that the presence of a commander is always most useful near that point at which the greatest struggle is likely to occur; thus he remained near Lord Bentinck's brigade, and close to the 42nd, on the extreme right, and there Quentin and his staff accompanied him.

The French left carried the village of Elvina,



and dividing into two great masses, one poured on against Baird's front, and the other assailed his right under cover of their gun battery, while their right assailed Hope at the pretty hamlet of Palavia Abaxo. And now the roar and carnage of the battle became general all over the field; men were falling fast on every side, "and human lives were lavished everywhere;" Baird's left arm was shattered by a grape-shot, and he was taken from the front to have it amputated; Middleton was struck about the same time, in the left side.

Lifting his cocked-hat, and bowing almost to his holsters, while a cloud of hair-powder flew about his head, this fine old soldier said, faintly, to the Master of Rohallion—

"I am wounded, colonel, and have the honour to request you will order another officer to take command of the left." He then ambled away on his old nag towards Corunna.

"Close in, men—fill up the gaps," was the incessant cry of the officers and sergeants; "close up the rear ranks—close up!" and cheerily they did so, those brave hearts and true.

As it was, the sparks of the flints, the burning of priming (many of the muskets being bushed with brass), caused many of the front rank men to have their cheeks bleeding by splinters or scorched by powder; but these were constant occurrences before the days of percussion locks and caps.

The fire of the enemy was terrible, and all who were not wounded had narrow escapes. Quentin had no less than three during the first hour ; a ball struck one of his holster pipes, another tore through his havresack, smashing his ration biscuits, and a third perforated his shako, and had he been an inch taller, he had been a dead man. The first tightening of the heart relaxed—the first wild thrill of anxiety over, and Quentin felt as cool as the oldest veteran there.

The light field guns as they retired from Elvina came tearing past with blood and human hair upon their wheels and on the hoofs of their galloping horses, showing the carnage through which they had passed ; but they were again unlimbered and brought into action to check the dragoons of Lorge, who menaced the right with pistol and sabre.

Sir John, who, with eagle eye, had been watching the movements of the enemy through the openings in the white smoke which rolled along the slopes and filled all the hollows, observed that no more infantry were coming on than those which outflanked the right of Baird's division, now commanded by his successor.

" Kennedy," said he to Quentin, whose coolness delighted and even amused him, " ride to my friend Paget, and order him to wheel to the right of the French advance, to menace and attack their gun battery. Stanhope,

spur on to Fraser and order him to support Paget."

While his aides rode off with these orders, he threw back the 4th Regiment in person, and opened a heavy fire on the French, now pouring along the valley on his right, while the old "Half Hundred" and the Black Watch confronted those who were breaking through Elvina.

"Well done, 50th—well done, my majors!" he exclaimed to two favourite officers who led the corps; but in the deadly struggle that ensued, one, Major Charles Napier, was taken prisoner, and the other, the Honourable Major Stanhope, was mortally wounded.

Strewed with killed and wounded, the field was now a veritable hell upon earth, all along the lines in the valley and on the hills.

The boom of the heavy guns from the rock pealed solemnly on the ear, and their bright red flashes came luridly out of the dusky vapour where the haze of a winter eve and the smoke of battle mingled.

Then there was the shrill scream of the shells as they soared aloft, describing fiery arcs through the cold grey sky, seeming to streak it with light; and there was the *whirr* or deep *hum* of the cannon shot as they tore along the corpse-strewn ground, or through the empty air.

After delivering his orders to Lord Paget, Quentin turned his horse to the right and pur-

sued the Aris road in rear of Hope's division, rushing at full speed over a great cork tree which the cannon shot had cut down; but he reined up for a moment near the flank of the Borderers.

Issuing from Palavia Abaxo, a corps of Delaborde's came furiously on with a savage yell, their bayonets fixed and tricolours flying defiantly, though torn by grape and musketry.

They were grenadiers of the Imperial Guard, and their long grey coats seemed black and sombre amid the smoke. Twice those men, the heroes of Austerlitz and Marengo, wavered, though never ceasing to pour in their fire; for the resolute aspect of the Borderers—calm and voiceless, but determined—seemed to arrest them, so the human surge paused in its onward roll.

Then it was that the Master of Rohallion, though cold-blooded, or animated chiefly by that selfish cosmopolitanism which is so peculiar to the Scottish aristocracy, felt something of his father's gallant spirit swell up in his heart.

"The 50th and the Highlanders are carrying all before them on the right," cried he, raising himself in his stirrups and brandishing his sword, "come on, 25th, let them see that we on the left are brother Scotsmen, as well as British soldiers—follow me—*charge!*"

And now, with a loud hurrah and like a living wall, while the pipes rung shrill and high, the regiment rushed headlong on the foe, and plung-

ing into the mass with the bayonet, hurled it back in ruin and bloody disorder beyond the village.

In this charge poor Rowland Askerne fell dead with a ball in his heart; Colville perished under five bayonet wounds; Colyear had the staff of the king's colour broken in his hand, and many others fell killed and wounded; but Cosmo, as if his life was a charmed one, yet escaped unhurt, and re-formed the corps in splendid order close to the village of Palavia Abaxo.

Quentin, who had only checked his horse to witness his old comrades make this most glorious charge, galloped on towards the right, where he found the foe still pressing forward, and Moore, sword in hand, at the head of the 42nd, most of whose pouches were now empty.

"My brave Highlanders!" the general exclaimed, "you have still your bayonets—*remember Egypt!*"

With a wild cheer, their plumes and tartans waving amid the smoke, the Celts rushed on and drove the French back in disorder upon Elvina.

A few minutes after this, just as Quentin dismounted to breathe his horse, and just as Captain (afterwards General and Viscount) Hardinge came forward to report that the Guards were advancing to support Bentinck's brigade, a round shot from the enemy's battery on those fatal rocks passed through them.

By the velocity of the ball, the mere force of

the air, Quentin was knocked down, breathless and panting. When he staggered up, he found the general lying near him, and a startled group gathering round them.

*The same ball* had mortally wounded Sir John Moore, by shattering his left breast and shoulder. Hurling from his saddle, he now lay on his back, bleeding and dying!



## CHAPTER XX.

## THE BURIAL.

“Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,  
As his corse to the ramparts we hurried,  
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot,  
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

“We buried him darkly at dead of night,  
The sods with our bayonets turning,  
By the struggling moonbeams' misty light,  
And the lantern dimly burning.”

CHARLES WOLFE.

MOORE's first impulse was to struggle into a sitting posture, and, while resting on his right hand, to watch the wild conflict between the French and Highlanders at Elvina. Not a sigh of pain escaped him, as he bent his keen blue eyes on the corps engaged in front; but on seeing the black and crimson plumes of the 42nd triumphantly waving in the village, a smile of gratification stole over his handsome face, and he allowed himself to be borne to the rear by six Highlanders and guardsmen, Quentin Kennedy and Captain Hardinge assisting to keep him in an easy position with the sash of the latter.

“Report to General Hope that I am wounded,”

said he, calmly, "and desire him to assume the command."

Quentin observed that Sir John's sword had got entangled in the wound, and that the hilt was actually entering it. On this, Captain Hardinge kindly and gently attempted to unbuckle it.

"Never mind it, dear Hardinge," said the dying hero; "I had rather it should go out of the field with me."

Fast flowed the blood, and the torture of the complicated wound was terrible! His hands were become cold and clammy, and his face grew deadly pale in the dusky twilight.

"Colonel Graham of Balgowan, and Captain Woodford of the Guards, are both gone for surgeons," said Quentin, in his ear, while Captain Hardinge now strove in vain to stop the crimson current with his sash; "they will soon be here."

"You will recover from your injuries," said Hardinge; "I can perceive it, Sir John, by the expression of your eyes."

"No, Hardinge," said he, gravely; "I feel *that* to be impossible!"

Several times he made the bearers turn him round that he might behold the field of battle, and then a sublime expression stole over his fine face on seeing that everywhere the French were falling back, and that his slender army, after all its sufferings, was triumphant!

At this moment a spring waggon passed, in

which lay Colonel Wynch, of the 4th Regiment, who was wounded.

"Who's in that blanket?" asked the colonel, faintly.

"Sir John Moore, most severely wounded," replied Quentin.

On hearing this, the good colonel, though bleeding fast, insisted on letting his general have the waggon ; but the Highlanders urged that they would carry him easier in the blanket, "so they proceeded with him to his quarters in Corunna, weeping as they went."

Still the echoing musketry pealed through the murky air, and still the death-dealing blaze reddened the dusk of the coming evening. Heavily it volleyed at times in the intervals between the cannon on the rocks, and through the mingled haze up came the blood-red disc of the winter moon. Great clouds of white powder smoke crept sluggishly along the earth, and through it the flashes of the French guns above Elvina came redly and luridly out.

On being brought to his billet in Corunna, Sir John Moore was laid on a pallet and examined, and then all could see the terrible nature of his wound.

The entire left shoulder was shattered ; the arm hung by a piece of skin ; the ribs over the heart were stripped of flesh and bruised to pieces, and the muscles of the breast were torn in long

strips that had become interlaced by the recoil of the fatal cannon-ball.

In the dusk of the gloomy apartment, where he lay rapidly dying on a poor mattress, he recognised the face of Colonel Anderson, an old friend and comrade of twenty years and more. It was the third time Anderson had seen him borne from a field thus steeped in blood, but never before so awfully mangled. Moore pressed the hand of his old friend, who was deeply moved.

"Anderson," said he, with a sad smile, "you know I have always wished to die in this way."

Anderson answered only with his tears, yet he was a weather-beaten soldier, who had looked death in the face on many a hard-fought field.

"Are the French beaten?" Moore asked of all who came in, successively, and the assurances that they were retiring fast soothed his dying moments.

"I hope the people of England will be satisfied—I hope my dear country will do me justice!" said he, with touching earnestness; "oh, Anderson, you will see my friends at home as soon as you can—tell them everything—my poor mother——" Here his voice completely failed him; he became deeply agitated; but after a pause said, "Hope—Hope—I have much to say to him, but am too weak now! Are all my aides-de-camp well?"

"Yes," replied Anderson, who did not wish to

distress him by the information that young Captain Burrard was mortally wounded.

"I have made my will, and—and—have remembered all my servants. Colbourne has it—tell Willoughby that Colbourne is to get his lieutenant-colonelcy.—Oh, it is a great satisfaction to me that we have beaten the French. Is Paget in the room?"

"No," replied Anderson, in a low voice.

"It is General Paget, I mean; remember me to him—he is a fine fellow! I feel myself so strong—ah, I fear that I shall be a long time in dying!"

In the intervals of his faint and disjointed remarks the boom of the distant artillery was occasionally heard, and their fitful flashes reddened the walls and windows of the room where he lay.

"Is that young lieutenant of the Fusiliers—Kennedy—is, is he here?"

"I am here, sir," said Quentin, in a choking voice.

"I cannot see you—the light of my eyes fails me now. I meant—I meant——for you."

What he "meant" to have done, Quentin was fated never to know.

In broken accents the general thanked the surgeons politely for the care they had taken; and apologized for the trouble he gave them. He then said to the son of Earl Stanhope, who served on his staff,

“Remember me—Stanhope—to—your sister.”

He referred to the famous and brilliant Lady Hester Stanhope, whom he was said to have loved, and who died in Syria in 1839. Here his voice again completely failed him, and while pressing to his breast the hand of Colonel Anderson, who had saved his life at St. Lucia, he expired without a struggle in his forty-eighth year. . . . .

All stood in silence around the pallet whereon that brave gentleman and Christian soldier lay dead, and some time elapsed before they could realize the full extent of the calamity which had befallen them, and with moistened eyes they watched the pale still face, the fallen jaw, the shattered and blood-soaked form.

Just as Colonel Anderson knelt down to close the eyes of his dead friend and commander, Quentin Kennedy, with a heavy sigh in his throat, a sob in his breast, issued from the house, and grasping the sabre of Colbert, Moore’s doubly-prized gift, he leaped on his horse, and, as if to relieve himself from thoughts of grief and sorrow, galloped towards the battle-field.

The night was now quite dark, and Sir John Hope had succeeded in following out Moore’s dispositions so well, that he had driven the whole French line so far back that the British had now advanced far *beyond* their original position.

All Soult’s ammunition was expended, though his troops were still the most numerous. He



could not advance, and neither could he retreat, as the rain-swollen Mero was foaming along in full flood in his rear, and the rudely re-constructed bridge of El Burgo was his only avenue for escape.

It was now that Hope ordered a great line of watch-fires to be lighted by the picquets, and to have them kept burning to deceive the enemy, while the wounded, so far as possible, were carried off, and the whole army embarked, covered by Rowland Hill's brigade, which was posted in and near the ramparts of the citadel.

The field presented a scene of unexampled horror as Quentin rode back towards Corunna. Worn out by the long day passed under arms, the troops fell back, in somewhat shattered order, by companies and regiments towards the beach, the shadow of night concealing innumerable episodes of suffering, of solitary and unpitied dissolution.

The British loss was estimated at eight hundred, the French at three thousand men, so superior were our arms and firing.

In a place where the dead lay thick there sat a piper of the 92nd; he was wounded and bleeding to death, yet he played to his retreating comrades so long as strength remained, and then lay back dead, with the mouth-piece of the chanter between his relaxed jaws.

Everywhere in the dark Quentin heard voices calling for water.

“Un verre de l’eau, pour l’amour de Dieu!” cried many a poor Frenchman unheeded, as the columns fell back in fierce exultation upon Corunna, in many instances double quick.

Quentin rode back to the town, a three-miles’ distance, and having neither post nor duty to repair to, went straight through the dark and crowded streets, which were full of soldiers and terrified citizens, to the house where he had seen his beloved leader expire. The door stood open; the mansion was dark, empty, chilly, and silent, and the body had been removed, he knew not where.

Just as he was turning away irresolute whether to inquire for the Borderers and get into one of the hundred boats now plying in the dark with war-worn troops, between the mole and fleet of transports, or whether he should join the staff of General Hill, whose brigade still occupied the citadel, a mounted staff-officer passed near him, and, by the light of a torch held by a Spaniard, who ran through the street, they recognised each other.

“’Tis well I have met you, Kennedy—come this way—we are about to pay the last earthly rites to poor Sir John Moore.”

He who spoke was Captain Hardinge, and Kennedy, without a word, for his heart was very full, accompanied him into the strong old citadel of Corunna. The church bells were tolling midnight, and all was pitchy blackness around, for

the moon was hidden ; but in the dim distance, along the abandoned position on the hills, a line of watch-fires burned like dim and wavering stars to deceive the beaten but yet too powerful enemy.

The dim light of a lantern, upheld by a soldier, shone faintly on a group of officers who stood near, silent, sad, and thoughtful, and leaning on their swords. All were bareheaded. Beside them lay a body muffled in a blue cloak and a blanket soaked with blood—the mutilated remains of Moore, for whom no coffin could be procured.

Close by, a party of the 9th or East Norfolk Regiment were digging a grave, and there stood the chaplain-general, book in hand, but without a surplice, for the sound of distant cannon announced that the French, already discovering that they were foiled, were pushing on to St. Lucia, and hastened the interment.

The “lantern dimly burning” was held by Sergeant Rollo, of the Artillery, who died lately at Tynemouth, in his eighty-second year, and by its fitful light the body was deposited in its last home.

“Aid me, good gentlemen,” said Colonel Anderson, with a broken voice, as the aides-de-camp lowered the remains into the rudely-dug hole, Quentin as the youngest carrying the feet. “It is a strange fatality, this ! He always said that if he fell in battle, he wished to be buried where

he died, and you see, gentlemen, his wish has been fulfilled."

Near him lay his countryman, General Anstruther, who had died of suffering and privations on the march.

Hastily the burial service was read, and the soldiers of the brave old 9th covered him up, literally, "the sod with their bayonets turning."

All lingered for a few minutes near the spot, and when they withdrew, there was not an eye unmoistened among them.

Thus passed away Sir John Moore, like Wolfe, in the moment of victory !

"A soldier from his earliest youth," says General Napier, "he thirsted for the honours of his profession, and feeling that he was worthy to lead a British army, hailed the fortune that placed him at the head of the troops destined for Spain. The stream of time passed rapidly, and the inspiring hopes of triumph disappeared, but the austerer glory of suffering remained ; with a firm heart he accepted that gift of a severe fate, and confiding in the strength of his genius, disregarded the clamours of presumptuous ignorance ; opposing sound military views to the foolish projects so insolently thrust upon him by the ambassador, he conducted a long and arduous retreat with sagacity, intelligence, and fortitude. No insult could disturb, no falsehood deceive him, no remonstrances shake his determination ;

fortune frowned without subduing his constancy ; death struck, and the spirit of the man remained unbroken, when his shattered body scarcely afforded it habitation. Having done all that was just towards others, he remembered what was due to himself. Neither the shock of the mortal blow, nor the lingering hours of acute pain which preceded his dissolution, could quell the pride of his gallant heart, or lower the feeling with which (conscious of merit) he asserted his right to the gratitude of the country he had served so truly.

“ If glory be a distinction, *for such a man death is not a leveller !*”

## CHAPTER XXI.

## TOO LATE.

“The storm of fight is hushed ; the mingled roar  
Of charging squadrons swells the blast no more :  
Gone are the bands of France ; the crested pride  
Of war, which lately clothed the mountain side,  
Gone—as the winter cloud which tempests bear,  
In broken shadows through the waste of air.”

GREY dawn came slowly in, stealing over land and sea, as Quentin rode from the citadel of Corunna.

It was difficult to believe that one night—one short night only—filled the interval of time since the fierce excitement of yesterday. Within those few hours how much had happened ! Many an eye that met his with a kind smile was sightless now, and many a cheerful and hearty voice with which he was familiar was silenced for ever.

When passing through one of the streets, he came suddenly upon Sir John Hope, who now commanded the army, and who said, while reining in his horse, which looked jaded and weary as himself—

“Oh—glad I’ve seen you, Mr. Kennedy ; is your horse fresh ?”



"Tolerably so, sir," replied Quentin.

"Then you will oblige me by riding round by the Santiago road, over the ground where Fraser's division was posted yesterday, before he advanced to support Paget, and bring off any stragglers you may see there. We have not a moment to lose, as the French are getting several guns into position above the San Diego Point, to open on our transports."

Without waiting for an answer, and as if his expressed wish was quite sufficient, the general cantered off towards the mole.

No way delighted with this duty, in the grey twilight of the morning, Quentin galloped through the Pescadera, quitted the outer fortifications, issued upon the road that led to Santiago de Compostella, and ere long found himself on that which he had now no heart to look upon—the field of battle—that vast sepulchre—that ripe harvest of death and suffering!

The dead were there mutilated in every conceivable mode, and lying in every conceivable position; some lay in little piles where the grape had mowed them down. Red-coat and blue-coat, Frank and Briton, the red-trowsered Celt of Gaul and the kilted Celt of Scotland, lay over each other in heaps, many of them yet in the death clutch of each other, but all sleeping peacefully the long, long slumber that knows no waking. It was a sad and terrible homily!

Muskets smashed at the stock, swords broken, bayonets bent, caps crushed; belts, plumes, and epaulettes torn; drums broken and bugles trod flat; half-buried shot and exploded shells, strewed all the ground, which was furrowed, torn up, and soaked in blood; trees were barked and lopped by the passing bullets, and hedges were scorched by fire.

Already the plunderers had been at work; an officer, covered with wounds, lay stripped, nearly nude, so his uniform had doubtless been a rich one. He was quite dead, and wore on his left arm a bracelet of female hair—a love relic; his head rested in the lap of a beautiful Spanish girl, so dark that she was half like a mulatto or gitana of Granada, and such she appeared to be by her picturesque costume. She was weeping bitterly, and over her dark cheeks and quivering lips the hot tears fell upon the cold face of the dead man. Her sobs were quite inaudible, for her grief was too deep for utterance.

Close by, with the medals of many an honourable battle on his breast, lay a grey-haired grenadier of the Garde Impériale, who had died about twenty minutes before, and the calm of dissolution was smoothing out the wrinkles that care, it might be a hidden sorrow, had traced upon his now ghastly face—so smoothly then that he became in aspect almost young again, as when, perhaps, a conscript he left his father's cottage and his mother's arms.

As Quentin rode on many called to him for succour that he was unable to yield, and to their piteous cries he was compelled to turn a deaf ear. Many lay wounded, faint and unseen, among the long rich grass, where they were lulled alike by weakness and the hum of insect life awaking with the rising sun ; and these scarcely noticed him as he trotted slowly past, carefully guiding his horse among them.

Tormented by thirst, many crawled, like bruised worms, to where a little runnel ran down the green slope from San Cristoval, and drank thirstily of its water in the hollow of their hands, and without a shudder, though the purity of the stream was tainted by blood, for further up lay a soldier of the Cameron Highlanders, dead, with his head buried in the stream. He, too, had crawled there ; but the weight of his knapsack had pressed his head and shoulders below the water, and thus, unable to rise from weakness, the poor fellow had actually been choked in a hole about twelve inches deep.

No stragglers were visible, and an awful stillness had succeeded to the roar of sound that rung there yesternight ; and now from his reverie Quentin was roused by the boom of a cannon at a distance. Others followed rapidly, and at irregular intervals. It was the French guns above St. Lucia firing over the flat point of San Diego on the last of the transports and the last of our troops

who were embarking. Hill's brigade had now left the citadel, and Beresford, with the rear-guard, had already put off from the shore.

Such were the startling tidings Quentin received from a mounted Spaniard, a fellow not unlike a contrabandista, who passed, spurring with his box-stirrups recklessly over the field towards Santiago. On hearing this, Quentin instantly galloped towards the harbour.

It was too late now to think of getting his horse off, so he resolved to abandon it and take the first boat he could obtain. The last of the troops were gone now in the English launches, and not a single Spanish barquero could he prevail upon to put off; and so furious was the cannonade which the French had opened from the headland to the southward of Corunna, that many of the masters of our crowded transports cut their cables; four ran foul of each other and went aground in shoal water. Then, amid the cries, cheers, uproar, and a thousand other sounds on land and sea, the troops were removed from them to others, and they were set on fire, while the first ships of the fleet were standing out to sea, and had already made an offing.

This delay nearly proved favourable to Quentin. A Spanish boatman at last offered for ten duros to take him off to the nearest ship, which lay about a mile distant; but just as he dismounted to embark, a yell of rage and terror was uttered by

the crowd upon the mole, and a party of French light dragoons rode through them recklessly, treading some under foot and sabreing others.

At the risk of being pistolled, Quentin was about to spring into the sea, when an officer made an attempt to cut him down, but his cap saved his head from the first stroke. In wild desperation, with one hand he clung to the chasseur's bridle, and with the other strove to grasp his uplifted sword-arm.

"Rendez-vous !" cried the Frenchman, furiously.

"Eugene—sauvez-moi !" was all that Quentin could utter, ere his assailant, whom at that moment he recognised, cut him over the head, and he fell, blinded in his own blood.

It was the *last* blow struck in our first campaign in Spain.

When Quentin partially recovered he found himself supported in the arms of the young Lieutenant de Ribeaupierre, who was profuse in his exclamations of sorrow and regret as he bound the wound up with his own hands, and led him away from the mole, expressing genuine anxiety and commiseration.

"Take care of your prisoner, M. le Lieutenant," said an officer, authoritatively. "*Sangdieu !* we have not picked up so many !"

"I shall be answerable for him. Ah, mon Dieu ! why did I not know you sooner ? Why

did you not speak first, my dear friend?" Ribeaupierre continued to repeat.

The captain of his troop gave them a stern and scrutinizing glance. He was a forbidding looking man, with that swaggering spur-and-sabre-clattering bearing peculiar to some of those who had found their epaulettes on the barricades or among the ruins of the Bastile—a species of military ruffian, whose bearing was tempered only by the politeness which all military discipline—French especially—infuses in the manners of men.

"Take his sword away," said this personage, gruffly.

"Eugene, ask him if I may retain it—it was the last gift of Sir John Moore?" said Quentin, with intense anxiety.

"That is well—you shall keep it, monsieur," said the gruff captain; "Sir John Moore was indeed a soldier!"

"Am I, then, a prisoner?" said Quentin, with a sigh of intense bitterness, as he looked after the distant ships, now beyond even the range of the guns at San Diego, and bearing away with all their sails set—away for England!

"My captain has seen you—it must be so," replied Ribeaupierre, leading him into the city; "but prisoner or not, remember, mon ami, that you are with *me*."

The measured tramp of infantry was now heard, and guarded by fixed bayonets, some thirty or



forty British prisoners passed with an air of sullen defiance in their faces and bearing. They were men of all regiments, gleaned up on the field or in the suburbs, and they were marched towards the citadel. Quentin gave a convulsive start as he recognised the face of Cosmo among them !

He saw Quentin covered with blood—wounded to all appearance severely, and a prisoner too ; so he gave him a parting smile full of malignity and hate.

Quentin cared not for this, he sprang forward to speak with him ; but at that moment the blood burst forth afresh, his senses reeled, and he fainted.

On that evening the tricolour was seen hoisted half-mast high on the citadel of Corunna, and the British fleet, though “far away on the billow,” could hear the French artillery as they fired a funeral salute over the grave of Sir John Moore, in a spirit that was worthy of France and the best days of France’s chivalry !

True it is, indeed, that “he whose talents exacted the praises of Soult, of Wellington, and of NAPOLEON, could be no ordinary soldier.”

But there was *one* in whose heart a blank remained that no posthumous honours could ever fill up—the heart of his mother, to whom Sir John Moore was ever a tender and affectionate son, and whom he loved with great filial devotion.

It was not for some weeks after all this that

Quentin learned that the Master of Rohallion had been sent a prisoner of war to Verdun, in the department of the Meuse, where his fierce pride having procured him the enmity of the commandant, he could never effect an exchange ; thus he remained on parole five long and miserable years, even until the battle of Toulouse was fought ; and, in the meantime, worthy old Jack Middleton recovered from his wound, and was appointed lieutenant-colonel of the 2nd Battalion of the King's Own Borderers.

## CHAPTER XXII.

MADAME DE RIBEAUPIERRE.

“ Who should it be? Where shouldst thou look for kindness?  
When we are sick, where can we look for succour?  
When we are wretched, where can we complain?  
And when the world looks cold and surly on us,  
Where can we go to meet a warmer eye  
With such sure confidence as to a mother?”

JOANNA BAILLIE.

A MONTH after the occurrence of the stirring events we have just narrated, Quentin Kennedy found himself an inmate of the same house with his young French friend at Corunna—the pretty villa that faced the bay of Orsan, the same mansion in which the Master of Rohallion spent that remarkable night before the battle.

General de Ribeaupierre had been appointed by Marshal Soult military governor of the town and citadel of Corunna, in which there was a strong French garrison; but instead of occupying the gloomy quarters assigned to the governor, Madame de Ribeaupierre, who had joined him, preferred the little Villa de Orsan near the coast, and had prevailed upon him to place Eugene on his staff as an aide-de-camp, and thus the whole

of her household now seemed, for the time, to be peacefully located in that remote corner of Gallicia.

Both madame and her husband the general were considerably past the prime of life. He was a fine courtly gentleman of the old French school, and in his secret heart was a sincere monarchist, but not so rashly as to oppose in act or spirit the tide of events which had replaced the line of St. Louis by Napoleon, with whom he had served early in life, as we have before stated, in the Regiment of La Fere.

Madame might still be called handsome, though long past forty. Perfectly regular, finely cut, and having all the impress of good birth and high culture, her features were remarkably beautiful. Her manner was singularly sweet, gentle, and pleasing; yet she had an eye and a lip indicative of a proud and lofty spirit, that had enabled her to confront the blackest horrors of the Revolution in France.

Powdered white as snow, she wore her hair dressed back over a little cushion, with a few stray ringlets falling behind in the coquettish manner of the old Bourbon days (when patches and pomatum were in all their glory), while her full bust, plump white arms, her short sleeves with long elbow-gloves, her peaked stomacher and her amplitude of brocade skirt, with many a deep flounce and frill of old Maltese lace, all

made her a pleasing picture at a time when, in imitation of the prevailing French taste, the English woman of fashion wore a huge muslin cap, her waist under her armpits, and her skirts so tight that she resembled nothing in this world but a long bolster set on end.

Knowing how much the young prisoner of war and Eugene owed to each other, and how much the former had suffered recently under the sabre of the latter, she rivalled her husband in kindness, and was unremitting in her hospitality, her nursing, and her motherly attention.

Quentin had the care of the best surgeons on the French staff—a class of medical men who far excelled the rabble of apothecary boys then commissioned for the British army; the cool season of the year was favourable for his recovering from such an ugly slash on the caput as Eugene's steel had bestowed; so, our hero, having youth and health on his side, grew rapidly well, and by the 16th of February—one month after the battle—he had become quite convalescent; but politeness even could scarcely make him repress his impatience to begone; yet he knew that, though the guest of General Ribeaupierre, he was still a prisoner of war, and could not leave any French territory until duly exchanged.

During his illness he had many a strange and fantastic dream of Flora and of home. But now there came to him dim memories of an infancy

*beyond* that spent at Rohallion; there was the quaint foreign town, with its winding river, its antique bridge, its boats and windmills. Like a dream, or some vision of mystic memory, he remembered this place in all its details and features, and with them came the old and confused recollection of a lady, it might be, nay, it *must* have been, his own mother, in rich velvet with powdered hair. Then came his father's face, pale and despairing, and the night of the wreck at the Partan Craig, all jumbled oddly together.

Was it a sense of pre-existence—that sense felt by so many at different times—that haunted him?

Was it a sense of the *unreality* of the present conflicting with the certainty of the past?

We cannot say; but there came upon his mind a strange consciousness that this scene, this river, with its town and woods and hills, this lady in velvet and powder, were not creations of the fancy, and were not new to him.

Was it a phase of that which is termed by Dr. Wigan the “duality of the human mind,” which comes upon us at times—

“As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood,  
And *ebb into a former life?*”

We pretend not to say; but poor Quentin was sorely puzzled, and that sabre cut in no way made his reasoning faculties clearer.

His room, a large one facing the bay of Orsan,



was decorated for him daily by a quantity of beautiful flowers, which madame procured from the conservatory of the captain-general—flowers so charming at that season—scarlet and white camellias, rare geraniums, and glorious roses of every hue; while in the trellis-work verandah without were magnolias and creeping plants whose tendrils were covered with odoriferous flowers, through which the sea-breeze came, blending and mingling pleasantly with the fragrant and earthy odour of the tiled floor, which was daily sprinkled with spring water.

And there in a softly-cushioned easy-chair he sat for hours gazing dreamily out upon the sunlit bay, where the brown Spanish fisher-boats, with lateen sails striped red and white, manned by dark and picturesque-looking fellows in shirts and caps of scarlet and blue, were always preparing for sea, or tacking out of the bay with the white foam curling under the bows—a life of movement and bustle that contrasted sadly with his own inertia and made him feverish with impatience.

Even Eugene's aspect, as he came clattering and rattling to and fro, between the citadel and the villa, in uniform and accoutred with spurs and sabre, showed that the game of life was still played briskly by others, and fretted Quentin's soul.

"A prisoner," he repeated to himself, "and

for heaven knows how long! Is this the fruit of my ambition? Is this the prize I have striven, struggled, and starved—fought and bled for during all the horrors of that campaign? Unlucky indeed was the hour when Hope sent me beyond the city on a bootless errand, and when Eugene cut me down on that accursed beach! Captivity even thus, though surrounded by every kindness and luxury, is more than I can either bear or endure! Besides,” he added, bitterly, aloud, “I may be reported dead or missing, and Flora—may—might—and my commission too—may be cancelled.”

“No, no, my good young friend,” said Madame de Ribeaupierre, who had entered unheard; “my husband, the general, saw all that properly arranged, and despatched Eugene in person, with a memorandum of your name and regiment, to the commissaire for British prisoners, to inform him that we had you here, where we mean to keep you as long as we can.”

“It was most kind, dear madame,” said Quentin, bowing low to hide confusion for his petulance, and leading the lady to a chair close by his own.

“Kind, monsieur, say you? It was but just and proper that your friends should know of your safety,” said she, with a bending of the neck, a species of bow that reminded Quentin of old Lady Rohallion; for this Frenchwoman had all

that old-fashioned grace which, in Scotland, died with the Jacobites, and in France expired with the monarchy. "Judging by my own fears and emotions, I was most anxious that—that your mother, I presume, should know that you, at least, had not perished on that unhappy 16th of January."

"My mother," repeated Quentin, and with the memory of his recent dreams a thrill of sadness came over his heart, as he looked into the fine dark eyes of this noble French matron, who seemed so inspired by feminine tenderness and commiseration that she placed her white hand caressingly on the half-healed scar which Quentin's short crisp hair but partially concealed.

"A naughty boy was my Eugene to do this, but he has never ceased to deplore it. Yes, your mother; ah, mon Dieu! it was well that she did not see as I saw you, after the mischief Eugene wrought, when the Chasseurs of the 24th carried you into the citadel covered with blood! Yet, if she knew all, she might safely trust you with *me*; for I have known what it is to lose a child ere this, and others whom I loved dearly—to be left alone, reft of that being whom I hoped was to love and remember me long after I had passed away. Eugene is a good boy, and I love him dearly; but you—your mother, mon ami?"

"Madame, I have *no* mother."

"Mon Dieu! and you so young!"

"No, nor any relation in the world," said Quentin, in a voice half angry and half broken, "save some brave friends who died at Corunna, and one in Scotland, far away, I never had any who loved me."

"L'Ecosse—l'Ecosse!" repeated Madame de Ribeaupierre with sudden interest. "We old-fashioned French love the memory of the old alliances when our royal houses so often intermarried, and still respect the land where the line of St. Louis finds a home; and so," she added, with kindling eyes, "monsieur is an Ecossais?"

"Yes, madame, I have every reason to believe so?"

"To believe—only to believe, monsieur?"

"Yes, madame."

"How?"

"It is my secret," said Quentin, smiling.

"Pardonnez-moi?" said madame, colouring slightly.

"My name is one of the oldest in Scotland."

"True—true; mon Dieu! I know there are earls of that name who have the tressure floré and counterfloré in their coat-of-arms," said she, while a sad and beautiful smile lit up her fine face, and she smoothed her powdered hair with a tremulous hand. "I had a dear friend who once bore the name—but it was in the old days of the monarchy, and for the sake of that friend I shall love you more than ever;" and patting

Quentin on the head, she kissed him on the brow just as her son entered with a servant in livery, who came to announce that the carriage was at the door.

"Très bien, Louis," said she; "monsieur will accompany us, Eugene, the day is so fine; he shall take his first drive with me, and you may follow on horseback if you choose. I don't like spurs in a carriage."

"I shall be very happy, my dear madame, though our mutual friend, the General de Ribeaupierre, has seen fit to send me no less than four times this morning with absurd messages to the sappers who are repairing the bridge of El Burgo," replied Eugene, whose boots and light-green uniform bore evident traces of mud.

"Come, Eugene, and never mind; as I am only your mamma, and not your intended, you have no need to be so particular with your toilet; and if your horse is weary, order a fresh one."

Quentin enjoyed the drive greatly, as it was his first active step towards final recovery and strength.

It was the evening of a clear and sunny day—one of the earliest of spring—and Quentin surveyed, with equal delight and interest, the long lines of massive bastions, towers, and battlemented walls that enclosed the town and citadel of Corunna—that vast stone frontage, with all its

rows of grim cannon that peered through dark port-holes or frowned *en barbette*, steeped in the warm radiance of a red setting sun that tinged the sea and surf with the hue of blood, sinking every alternate angle of the fortifications in deep and solemn shadow.

The music of a French regimental band came floating pleasantly from time to time on the thin air, as they played the grand march of the Emperor along the ramparts ; and now the carriage, by Eugene's desire, was stopped near a part of the citadel where Sir John Moore's grave lay, and where the French sappers were already building the great granite monument which the noble Soult erected to his memory, and which the Marquis of Romana completed.

Quentin descended from the carriage and approached the spot.

He was the last, the only British soldier in Corunna now. He sat down on one of the blocks and looked wistfully at the place where he knew the poor shattered corse lay uncoffined. Then the manly figure, the gentle face, the soldierly presence, and the winning manner of Moore came vividly to memory, and Quentin covered his eyes with his hand, as he could not control his emotion.

He was the last solitary mourner by the grave of him whose memory Charles Wolfe embalmed in verse.

The French sappers, who had been singing and



laughing gaily at their work, respected his grief; they became quite silent, and saluted him with great politeness. Then Madame de Ribeaupierre took him by the hand and they drove away.

In the general's well-hung, cosy, and handsome Parisian carriage, he passed more than once over the field of battle. Its sad débris had vanished now; the people of the adjacent villages had gleaned up every bullet and button. The dead were buried in trenches. Here and there might lie a solitary grave, but already the young spring grass was growing over them all. Quentin knew the ground where the Borderers had been posted, and thus he knew which of those fatal mounds was likely to hold the noble and true-hearted Rowland Askerne, Colville, and others whom he knew and mourned for.

Even the *étourdi* Eugene was silent, when, for the last time, they surveyed the field.

"Here the 24th charged a square of one of your Scots regiments," said he; "and here fell poor Jules de Marbœuf. It was his last battle."

"Killed?"

"Yes—dead as Hector, by some of your bare-legged Scotsmen, who took the eagle of the 24th. *Sacré Dieu!*—think of that!"\*

\* In February after the battle, two French eagles, each weighing fifteen ounces of silver, were sold to a silversmith in Chichester by a soldier of the 92nd Highlanders, who said that he had bayoneted the Frenchmen, and brought the trophies home in his knapsack.—*Annual Register* for 1809.

"And Donna Isidora?" said Quentin, not caring much about the eagle.

"The sorrowful widow—*peste!* she is at Lugo with the Light Division."

"She is not coming here, I trust?"

"Can't say, *mon camarade*; but *pardieu*, I should hope not."

Though Quentin knew that his commission and promotion in the 7th Fusiliers were now both secured, he writhed under the idea of being a prisoner of war; but there was no help for it. He had given his parole of honour, and by that he was bound to abide.

Not even the keen longing to see Flora, to tell his story and lay his laurels, while they were yet fresh, at her feet, could lure him to break his bonds; but being intensely wearied of Corunna, he hailed with extreme satisfaction a change in the plans of the really delightful family with whom he resided.

Tidings of a new and more powerful expedition, destined to drive the French from Spain, under Sir Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington, had now come to all the Emperor's marshals and garrisons officially; and thus General de Ribeaupierre resolved on sending his lady, in charge of Eugene, to Paris, whither they begged Quentin to accompany them.

Anything was better than lingering in Corunna or setting out for Verdun; and so, bidding adieu

to the kind old general, within a few weeks after his convalescence, Quentin found himself kindly adjusting the wraps and muffings of madame on the deck of the *Bien Aimé*, a privateer brig, mounting six 12-pounders, M. Marin, captain, bound for the mouth of the Loire; and long did he and Eugene pace the deck together that night, building castles, exchanging confidences, and smoking cigars, while the wild waves of the Bay of Biscay tore past in dark ridges to leeward, and the last of the Galician hills, the great Sierra de Mondonedo, sank into the dark world of waters astern.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## THE "BIEN AIMÉ."

"He had fought the red English, he said,  
In many a battle in Spain;  
He cursed the red English, and prayed  
To meet and fight them again!"—THACKERAY.

LE BIEN AIMÉ encountered very rough weather, and beat hard against the westerly winds which always prevail in the stormy Bay of Biscay, where the broad waves of the Atlantic roll in all their full and unbroken weight.

The third night was so dark and gusty, that neither Quentin Kennedy nor Eugene de Ribeaupierre turned in, but remained at the table much later than usual, listening to the somewhat piratical yarns and experiences of M. Jehan Marin, a short, thick-set, and savage-looking fellow, who wore a tricoloured nightcap, a pea-jacket, and a broad black belt, with a square brass buckle of most melodramatic size. He viewed Quentin evidently with intense dislike, as one of those sacré Anglais, whom he hated as so many snakes or other reptiles, and to this sentiment was added a profound contempt for him as a soldier. Quentin was soon

sensible of all this, but deemed it neither safe nor worth his while to notice it; besides, the life of a prisoner of war was deemed of very little value by land or sea in those days.

On this night, just as they went on deck to have a last glance at the pitchy blackness amid which *Le Bien Aimé* was careering, a flash broke through it, and a cannon-shot boomed across her forefoot; another flash followed, and the shot went through her foresail, which was bellying out upon the wind.

"Tonnerre de Dieu! what is that?" cried M. Marin, choking and sputtering with passion and alarm, as he jumped upon a carronade and peered to windward, from whence the assault came, but could see nothing, so intense was the darkness.

Boom! another heavy gun came, and now he could make out a strange ship, looming large and black on the larboard bow, and carrying an enormous spread of canvas, considering the nature of the night, and it was the guns of her starboard-quarter that were tickling *Le Bien Aimé* in this rough fashion.

"Nombril de Beelzebub!" bellowed Captain Marin, "here we are in action without seeing or knowing who the devil it is with! Beat to quarters—pipe up the hammocks and open the magazine!"

Just as he was speaking and gesticulating furiously, another shot knocked the fiddle-head of

the *Bien Aimé* all to splinters; so matters were looking decidedly serious. By this time, and long ere the drum beat, his crew, half dressed, were all at their quarters, and the hammocks were bundled anyhow into the side nettings.

“Clear away those weather-guns—cast loose the lashings, and load!” shouted Marin; “stand by the watch to shorten sail; ’way aloft and hand the topgallant sails; small-arm men, aft, and blaze away!”

*Le Bien Aimé* was now hove full in the wind’s eye, so that the next shot from this strange ship went no one knew where.

There were terrible confusion, growling, swearing, with lack of discipline, on board, but no lack of pluck among the crew, and fifty of the most finished ragamuffins that ever sailed from the Loire or Brest stood to their guns.

The next cannon that flashed from the strange ship made Quentin, who clung to a belaying pin on the port side, spring backwards involuntarily, the red light of the explosion seemed so close; but it enabled him to see for an instant the large ship with her lee side full of men.

“She is a frigate, at least!” exclaimed Marin, with a frightful oath, as he drew his cutlass; “we cannot fight her; she may be French, and the whole affair a mistake, though: hush, silence fore and aft—they are hailing!”



"Ho—brig ahoy!" sang out a voice in most unmistakeable English.

Jehan Marin ground his yellow teeth—those cursed English! Could he doubt that any but they would first fire and then question?

"Hallo!" he replied.

"What brig is that?" hailed the officer, through a trumpet, and Quentin felt his heart beating wildly with anxiety and anticipation. Next moment he heard Eugene and the French skipper engaged in a brief but very angry expostulation.

"What is the matter?" he asked, as Eugene joined him.

"Don't inquire," said he, "lest I blush that I am a Frenchman."

"Then your conference concerned *me*?"

"It certainly did, mon ami."

"How?"

"Marin wished to force you to deceive your countrymen, by replying to them in English—replying with his pistol at your head. *Sangdiou!* you comprehend?"

Before Quentin could reply, the question,

"What brig is that? d—n it, you had better look sharp!" came over the black surging water from the foe.

"Stand by the braces, and be ready to fill the sails to the yard-heads, and bear away right before the wind," said Marin; then, raising his

voice, he shouted a deep and bitter curse through his trumpet.

"Hail again," cried the officer; "this is His Britannic Majesty's ship *Medusa*—send a boat off instantly with your skipper and his papers."

Instead of complying, Marin daringly gave orders to fire his three 12-pounders on the port-side, to fill his yards, and bear right away before the western breeze; but on the appearance of the first portfire glittering on his deck, bang came another shot from this pugnacious stranger, which took his foreyard right in the sling; it came crashing down on deck, breaking the arm of one man and the leg of another; and before M. Marin had made up his mind what to do next, the *Medusa*, a fifty-gun ship, forged a little way ahead of him, as if she meant to sweep his deck or sink him; but neither was her object, for a boat's crew of those "pestilent Englishmen," with pistols in their belts and cutlasses in their teeth, were alongside in a moment, holding on with boat-hooks to the forechains, as the now partly unmanageable brig rose and fell heavily on the black waves of that stormy midnight sea. Another boat-load clung like leeches to the starboard quarter, and in less than five minutes the *Bien Aimé* was the lawful prize of the British frigate, *Medusa*.

Her crew were all disarmed and placed under a guard of marines; a strong hawser was run on

board and made fast to the capstan or windlass, the yard heads were trimmed, a jury fore-yard rigged in a trice, and the privateer in tow of the *Medusa* stood off towards the coast of "perfidious Albion." The weather was so rough, however, that they were compelled to slack off or let go the towline; but lanterns were hoisted at the foreyard, and thus they kept company till daylight.

"Fortune changes," said Eugene, laughing with all the nonchalance of a Frenchman; "you are now free, and I am a prisoner."

The prize-master, a rough and somewhat elderly man for a middy—one of those hardworking fellows whose boast it used to be that they came into the service through the hawse-holes, questioned the cabin passengers sharply and categorically.

"You, sir," said he, looking at Eugene, cutlass in hand; "what are you?"

"Eugene de Ribeaupierre, sous-lieutenant in the French service, and ready to give my parole."

"Keep it till we are at Spithead; and *you*, sir," he added, turning furiously to Quentin, "are an Englishman, I see, and in the French service too—eh?"

"No, sir; I happen to be a Scotsman, and in the British service."

"Where are your papers?"

"I have none."

"Oho; d—n me! you have none?" said he, suspiciously.

"No; but my name is recorded in the ship's books as a prisoner of war, a lieutenant in the 7th Fusiliers, proceeding to Paris on parole."

The mid shook Quentin's hand on hearing this, and ordered a jorum of grog, in which Eugene good-naturedly joined him, remarking—

"Ma foi, monsieur, don't be too sure of having us at the Spithead."

"Why not, if the wind holds good?"

"Some of our ships may retake us—aha!"

"No fear of that, mounseer; the sea at present is only open to *us*," was the composed reply.

Marin, who sat in a corner, imprecated his fate bitterly; he cursed what he considered Eugene's squeamishness, which prevented him from availing himself compulsorily of Quentin's aid to deceive the *Medusa*; but consoled himself by the hope that "he would yet take it out of the hides of those 'sacré Anglais,' in some fashion or other."

"Take up the slack of your jawing-tackle, Johnny," said the mid; "drink your grog, shut up, and turn in; your ill luck to-night may be mine to-morrow."

Madame de Ribeaupierre was greatly concerned by the turn her affairs had taken; but at a time when the whole sea was covered by the cruisers

of the largest fleet in the world, it was strange that she did not anticipate some such catastrophe.

When it was reported to the captain of the *Medusa* that the wife of General de Ribeaupierre was in the *Bien Aimé*, he politely offered her the use of a cabin on board his ship; but having no wish to be separated from Eugene, she continued in the privateer, with which the frigate kept company for several days, until she saw her close in shore under the white cliffs of Old England, when she brought her starboard tacks on board, and, like a great eagle in search of fresh prey, stood over towards the coast of France. Thus, on the evening of the 16th of March, exactly two months after the battle of Corunna, Quentin found the *Bien Aimé* safely anchored at Spithead, close by the guns of a line-of-battle ship.

There Eugene gave his parole, and Quentin found himself a free man!

The news spread rapidly in Portsmouth and in the Isle of Wight that the wife and son of Bonaparte's favourite cavalry officer, the Governor of Corunna, had been brought in as prisoners; and thus, on the very day they were preparing to go on shore, escorted by Quentin, a staff-officer, in full uniform, came fussily on board in a boat pulled by marines.

Quentin recognised in him Lloyd Conyers, the aide-de-camp, whom he had frequently seen in Spain.

He had come, he stated, "by direction of the General commanding in the Isle of Wight, to invite Madame de Ribeaupierre, with her friends and attendants, to share the hospitality of his house—to consider it as her home, in fact, until she could make such arrangements as she wished."

"Is the general married, monsieur?" asked madame, smiling; "for I am not so *very* old."

"Madame, the general *is* married, and is nearer seventy than sixty," replied Conyers, laughing behind his great staff plume. "A boat is in readiness, and a carriage awaits you on the beach. The general lives at Minden Lodge, St. Helen's—we dine at half-past six."

Madame de Ribeaupierre, who was considerably crushed and crestfallen, accepted the general's offer; and accompanied by her maid, who had many misgivings and vague terrors of the natives, by her son and her aide-de-camp, as she laughingly styled Quentin, landed in the Isle of Wight; and for the first time in her life found herself treading English ground.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

## MINDEN LODGE.

“What thing is Love, which not can countervail  
Naught save itself? even such a thing is Love.  
And worldly wealth in worth as far doth fail,  
As lowest earth doth yield to heaven above.  
Divine is Love, and scorneth worldly pelf,  
And can be bought with nothing but with self.”

RALEIGH.

THE month was only March ; but in that southern portion of England, the white daisy and the golden buttercup already spotted the green sward ; the hedge-rows nearly in full leaf, were quite like bird-meadows, so full were they of song ; while the coo of the ring-dove and the wild pigeon were already heard in the copse. The gardens teemed with beautiful flowers, and the air was delicious, the heat of the great white chalky cliffs being tempered by the breeze from the deep blue sea.

When the three guests reached his residence at St. Helen's, the general and all his suite were absent, at the inspection of the parochial artillery ; for even then, so lately as the days of Corunna, the ancient custom of each parish in the Isle of Wight providing itself with one small piece of

cannon, usually a six-pounder, to be kept in the church, or some small house built for the purpose close by, was still in force; and the recent threats of invasion had made the islanders somewhat expert as gunners, in handling their brigade of some thirty field-pieces.

Built on an eminence at the pretty village of St. Helen's, near the mouth of the Bradinghaven, Minden Lodge was a spacious and handsome mansion; and though the three visitors knew not the names of the localities, from the lofty windows of the spacious and elegant drawing-room, they had a fine view of Calshot Castle, of Portsmouth steeped in sunny haze, about seven miles distant, its harbour crowded with shipping; Spithead, with all the men-of-war at anchor, and the little *Bien Aimé*, with the union-jack waving above her tricolour; while far off in distance rose the taper spire of Chichester Cathedral.

The rolling of carriage wheels upon gravel walks, the opening and shutting of doors, announced the return of the general's party from the inspection; but for a time no one appeared, and already the hands of the ormolu clock indicated a quarter past six.

Madame had made rather an elaborate toilet; her maid had dressed and powdered her fine hair to perfection, and she was in all the amplitude of her flowered brocade and rich black lace, her antique steel and diamond ornaments, a gift

from the Grand Monarque to her grandmother the Marquise de Louvre; Eugene had on the full uniform of the 24th Chasseurs à Cheval, minus only his sword; Quentin felt himself obliged to appear in some kind of uniform, too (mufti was vulgar then), and so had carefully brushed up his old and worn-out volunteer coat of the 25th, to which he added a pair of silver epaulettes and a crimson sash, bought from a Jew of Corunna, who had no doubt found them on the field.

They were sorely discoloured and torn; but he had the handsome gold belt and the sabre of General Colbert—the gift of Moore. Embrowned, taller, fuller, manlier, and looking even more handsome than ever, he was not astonished at being totally unrecognised; though *he* was startled, and beyond description bewildered, when the familiar voice of old Jack Andrews (who was clad in the Crawford livery), as he threw open the drawing-room door, announced “Lord and Lady Rohallion, Miss Warrender, *and* Captain Conyers.”

Looking not a day older, but rather younger and better than when he had seen them last, Lord Rohallion entered in the full uniform of a general officer, as orthodoxly powdered and pig-tailed as ever; Lady Winifred in all the plenitude of her old-fashioned costume, with her high-dressed hair puffed and white as snow, and looking, though senior in years, somewhat the counterpart of Madame de Ribeaupierre, her necklace and

ornaments being equally antique, with opals and diamonds that were *reversible* in the course of an entertainment; and there, too, was Flora, looking so charming, so dove-eyed, and blooming, in full dress for dinner, but leaning on the arm of a lisping and most-decidedly-too-attentive puppy of an aide-de-camp.

So confounded was Quentin by the sudden appearance of these four persons, that he stood as if rooted to the carpet, unable to speak or advance, while apologies were profusely made by Lord and Lady Rohallion for their absence at the inspection on Bemerston Downs.

"You will make this house your home, my dear Madame de Ribeaupierre," said Lady Winifred, "until you choose to leave it for Paris——"

"We shall be in no hurry arranging the cartel for that," said Lord Rohallion; "though I have no doubt," he added to Eugene, "you will be impatient to rejoin your regiment—light cavalry, I think?" Eugene bowed very low; "and this gentleman ——"

"Monsieur Kennedy—a name once very dear to me," said Madame de Ribeaupierre, presenting Quentin; "and dearer now again for the services he and my Eugene have performed for each other."

Lord Rohallion bowed, and shook the hand of Quentin cordially, but did not remark his features particularly, till the expression of astonishment and joy, half mingled by doubt and fear, which

he saw, while surveying alternately the faces of Flora and Lady Winifred, attracted all his attention.

"Quentin—Quentin Kennedy!" they exclaimed together. Flora seemed tottering and deadly pale; but Lady Rohallion threw herself into his arms, and sobbed hysterically.

Conyers played with the tassels of his sash, and thought himself decidedly in the way. . . .

Brief and rapid were the questions asked, and explanations given now; other guests came crowding in till the dinner-party was complete, and Jack Andrews made the gong send its thunder from the vestibule: thus they were compelled to compose themselves, nor indulge in that which well-bred English society so eminently abhors—a scene.

"I was thought too old to command a brigade in the field, Quentin," said Lord Rohallion, shaking the hand of his young friend, at least for the sixth time; "so the Duke of York kindly sent me to this quiet place. If the flat-bottomed boats ever leave Boulogne, they will find me, however, at my post; and, egad! I hope to show them there is life in the old dog yet!"

Conyers, the aide, who no doubt usually acted as esquire to la belle Flora, was considerably put out—disgusted, in fact—when he found her completely appropriated by another; while he was compelled to offer his arm to the buxom wife of an adjutant of a Veteran battalion.



“Flora !”

“Quentin !”

They had no other words for each other, even in whispers, as they went mechanically to the dining-room, where all the cold formality of a grand state dinner was to be enacted and endured.

A strange throbbing thrill ran through Quentin's heart, as memory went back to that last meeting in the sycamore avenue, and *the last kiss* given there, as he seemed with the touch of her hand to take up the long-dropped link of a life that had passed away—his boyish life of joy and love at Rohallion—long dropped, but never forgotten !

They were young, but, strange to say, in their instance, separation for a time, instead of cooling, strengthened their mutual regard ; and when Flora spoke, the old familiar sound of her soft and beloved voice made the tender link complete.

She drew off her glove and smilingly held up a little white hand. There was but one ring on it—the diamond gift of Madame de Ribeaupierre, sent at a time when Quentin had no other gift to send ; and the curious history of it afforded them ample conversation during dinner. As for Eugene, who sat opposite, he seemed immensely consoled, under his unhappy circumstances, by a blue-eyed and fair ringleted daughter of the Commissary General from Newport, that young lady's patriotic animosity to France seeming in



no way to extend to a handsome young fellow in the green coat lapelled with white of the 24th Chasseurs à Cheval; so thus the daughter of "la perfide Albion" had it all her own way.

Then the old General and Madame de Ribeau-pierre were, as Eugene phrased it in the French camp style, "like a couple of *fourbisseurs*," they sat with their powdered heads so close together; but they were deep in recollections of the old court of the Bourbons, of the Scoto-French alliance, of the days of the monarchy, all of which Eugene was wont to stigmatize as "the rubbish of the world before the flood," for he was one of those young men who wisely, perhaps, don't see much use in looking back at any time.

Lady Rohallion had, of course, innumerable questions to ask concerning Cosmo; but, kept so distantly aloof as he had been by that uncompromising personage, Quentin found great difficulty in satisfying the anxious mother. Then Lord Rohallion asked many a question concerning the old Borderers; but as Quentin's battalion had been the *second*, and was consequently a new one, he had some difficulty in satisfying all his inquiries.

Fresh from foreign service and the seat of war, whence some rather exaggerated stories of scrapes and perils had preceded him, Quentin experienced all the intense boredom of finding himself "an object of interest." This annoyance was all the greater, that he was absorbing and absorbed by Flora, the

heiress, the general's beautiful and wealthy ward, who had already turned the heads of all the hard-up fellows in the adjacent garrison towns.

All things have an end ; even the longest and most stately of dinners, so in due time the ladies retired to the drawing-room. As Madame de Ribeaupierre passed Quentin, her cheek was flushed with pleasure and gratified pride by the attention she had received from the courtly old lord—that noble pair d'Ecosse ; her eyes were bright, and she still looked indeed beautiful.

“ Ah, my child, Quentin, I can see what I can see,” she whispered ; “ it is *she* whom you love, then ? ”

“ Yes, madame, most dearly,” said Quentin, smiling.

“ C'est un ange ! and I shall always love her, too ! ” exclaimed the impulsive Frenchwoman, as she kissed Flora's blushing cheek.

“ Quentin, follow us soon,” said the latter, tapping him with her fan ; “ I want to hear more about that Spanish lady at the Villa de Maciera.”

The gentlemen lingered over their wine ; much “ shop and pipeclay ” were talked, with reserve, however, as Eugene was present ; but the merits of the new shako, and the probability of the expected brevet, were as usual fully discussed. The first to join the ladies in the drawing-room was Quentin, who felt very much as if in a dream, from which he might waken to find him-

self in the cabin of the *Bien Aimé*, in the Villa de Orsan, or, worse still, in some comfortless bivouac in Estremadura; and glad were these united friends when the guests had taken their leave, and they were all left to themselves in the drawing-room.

Much conversation and many explanations ensued; and a very simple remark, by stirring a certain chord of memory, was the happy means of bringing about a very unexpected revelation or dénouement—one, indeed, so remarkable as to deserve a chapter to itself.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## THE REVELATIONS OF A NIGHT.

“Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,  
Old Time is still a-flying;  
And this same flower that smiles to-day,  
To-morrow will be dying.  
Then be not coy, but use your time,  
And while you may, go marry;  
For having lost but once your prime,  
You may for ever tarry.”—HERRICK.

“It has come strangely about, Madame Rohal-lion, how my son Eugene, and your—your friend, Mr. Kennedy, have met during the contingencies of service in Spain,” said Madame de Ribeau-pierre; “and it is all the more strange that *my* name was once Kennedy.”

We are sorry to say that the good lady pronounced it Kinnidée.

“Yours, madame?”

“My first husband was so named.”

“Madame has then been twice married?”

“Yes; and Eugene is the only son of the general’s first wife, for he has been twice married, too,” said Madame Ribeaupierre, with one of her merry little laughs.

"But I have always loved you, madame, as my mother," said the young officer.

"Indeed, child, you never knew any other," replied madame, as Eugene kissed her forehead very affectionately.

"Then was your first husband a Scotsman?" asked Lord Rohallion.

"He was, monsieur le général, a captain in the King's service during the monarchy."

"Was he killed in action, madame?"

"No, poor man—he was drowned at sea."

"In what year was this?"

"Alas! it was in 1798."

A keen, bright glance was exchanged by Lord and Lady Rohallion on hearing this; a light seemed to break upon their minds simultaneously.

"Madame, pardon me," said the lady, very hurriedly, "but may I enquire what is your christian name?"

"Josephine."

"Josephine!"

"Yes, madame. I was named at the font, Josephine St. Marie Duré de Lusart."

"Good heavens, my lord, if it should be so!" exclaimed Lady Rohallion, hurrying to her escritoire and bringing forth an old faded and yellow packet, from which she took a ring—the same that had been found on Quentin's father. It bore, as we have stated elsewhere, the name of

Josephine graven on the gold, and a crest, a demi-griffin cut on an amethyst.

"This ring, madame—this ring—where did it come from? It was my mother's gift to my first husband, Captain Kennedy, of the Scottish regiment de Berwick, in the service of France; and this letter," continued Madame de Ribeaupierre, with increasing agitation, "this letter was mine—mine, written to him after he had left me with our child to return to his own country, whither I was to follow him——"

"And this commission, madame?"

"Was his—was his," she exclaimed, becoming deeply excited, as she pressed to her lips the signature of Louis XVI. "How came it here? And this letter, too, of Monsieur le Comte d'Artois, written to him after the campaigns on the Meuse and Rhine?"

"They were found in the pocket-book of Quentin's father, when he was cast drowned on the beach, with him, then a little child, senseless and benumbed by cold," said Lady Rohallion, with one arm placed caressingly round the Frenchwoman's neck, and with her eyes full of tears, as the wild and stormy night on which our story opened came back to memory.

Madame Ribeaupierre became quite hysterical.

"My son—you? oh, mon Dieu! mon Dieu! and this was your secret at the Villa de Orsan," she exclaimed, in a very touching voice,



as she pressed to her breast the somewhat bewildered Quentin, who, having been deeply engaged with Flora, had heard not a word of the foregoing conversation.

After a time, however, she related that her husband, who had left Scotland in consequence of some quarrel, she believed, with his own family, had taken his mother's name of Kennedy, and entered the regiment de Berwick, in which he faithfully served the French monarchy, even after it was completely shattered by the Revolution.

That, on a rumour rising that Monsieur, then residing at Holyrood, was about to reconstitute the Hundred Scottish Guards, with consent of the British Government, he departed hurriedly from France, leaving her at Arques, with her mother, Madame Duré de Lusart, who was then on her death-bed. Accompanied by the Abbé Lebrun, an old friend, he set out for Scotland, taking with him their little son. She added, that the vessel in which they sailed was a Scottish brig, under cartel, and bound for the Clyde; but it was, nevertheless, attacked by a French privateer, off the coast of Britain somewhere—where she knew not—but far to the north. The vessel was driven on a rock, and all perished save the Abbé Lebrun, who saw both her husband and child sink into the waves and die together.

More fortunate, M. l'Abbé floated out to sea upon a spar, and was picked up next morning, in

a most exhausted condition, by the same privateer which had done all the mischief.

Notwithstanding all the skill of the great Doctor Thiebault, who came from Paris, her mother died, and now she found herself childless and alone in France—the terrible France of the Republic—and where she was hourly in peril of the guillotine as an aristocrat.

The Bastile had been razed to the ground; that was good; but the change that had come over France was not for the better; “the gilded coach, the red-heeled slipper, and the supper of the Regency; the powdered marquise, for a smile of whose dimpled mouth the deadly rapier flashed in the moonlight—the perfumed beauty, for one of whose glances a poet would have ransacked his brain to render it smoothly in verse;” the high-bred old courtier, the gilded salon—had all given place to regiments of sans-culottes, to assassins, and the sovereign people—to the République démocratique et sociale; to planting trees of liberty, and grape-shotting the mob; to sham Roman citizens and tribunes; to women debating the existence of a God, and dancing nude in the fêtes of Venus; to a France of heroes and madmen—a Paris of “monkeys and tigers!”

Her country had become intolerable to her; she was long in despair, she said, and but for the kindness and love of her friend, Marie de Ribeaupierre, a chanoinesse of the Chapter of Salles, in

Beaujolais, she must have sunk under the loss of all her friends ; but after a time Marie's brother came ; he was then a captain in the regiment of La Fere, a handsome man, and in the prime of life, and, happily for himself, stood high in the favour of Citizen Bonaparte. In the end, she added, with a little smile and a very faint blush, she learned to love him. They were married, and then she strove to console herself for the loss of her own child by making a pet of his, the little Eugene.

“ Ah, mon Dieu ! mon Dieu ! ” she exclaimed, “ what subtle instinct was this ? what mysterious voice was that which whispered in my heart to love you, Quentin ? I have only learned your name to-night ; but how often did I ask of myself, at the Villa de Orsan, what is this stranger—this young Scottish officer—to me, that I should feel so deeply interested in him ? Oh, Ribeaupierre, my dear husband, what a strange story I shall have to tell you ! That he, for whom I prayed nightly, and thanked God for saving the life of *your* son Eugene, proves to be mine—the child of my own bosom—my long-lost little Quentin ! Truly the hand of a kind and blessed Providence has been in all this ! ”

After she became a little more composed, she desired her maid to bring from her dressing-table a casket, which she unlocked, saying that she would show Quentin a miniature of his father—

a relic on which she had not looked for many a day; and he gazed on it with eager, earnest, and mournful tenderness.

It was the face of a dark-complexioned and thoughtful-looking young man, with his hair simply tied by a blue ribbon; there was a singular combination of mildness, sadness, and softness in the features and their expression; but when it was handed to Lady Rohallion, a sharp little cry, as if of pain, escaped her.

"Reynold—my lord—look here—you know this face!" she exclaimed.

"My brother Ranulph, for a thousand guineas! Why, madame, this is a miniature of my brother Ranulph Crawford, who was killed, we were told, in the defence of the Tuileries."

"No—no—impossible! impossible! Captain Crawford who fell there was our dear friend—he commanded the grenadiers of the regiment de Berwick. My husband took, I know not why, his mother's name in France; and that miniature he hung round my neck on the day we were married in Arques by the good Abbé Lebrun."

"I can swear that it was painted for me, about three years after Minden, by honest David Allan of Alloa, whose name should be within it."

"True, monsieur, behold!" she added, opening the locket by a spring; "there is the name of Monsieur Allan, and this is Quentin's hair, when

it was the colour of gold, woven up with—with his poor father's."

"This is wonder upon wonder!" exclaimed Flora Warrender, as she hung on the neck of Madame de Ribeaupierre, who kept the right hand of Quentin pressed upon her heart, while Eugene, who stood by, was stroking his moustache, and thinking if he had anything to do in the way of kissing, he would certainly prefer Flora.

Lady Rohallion was silent.

So the boy, by whose cradle in infancy she had watched with such motherly solicitude, was the nephew of her husband, the cousin-german of Cosmo; the son of that younger brother who had been the first love of her girlish days—the worshipper of her girlish beauty, in the pleasant times long past in sunny Nithsdale, the courtly gentleman and gallant soldier of fortune, over whose life she had cast a shadow. It was a strange mystery!

Some such idea was passing in the mind of her husband.

"Good heavens, Winny! so that poor father, whose fate is yet a legend among our tenantry—the poor man who struggled so bravely to save his child, when the ship was shattered on the Partan Craig—who died in sight of Rohallion, and whom honest John Girvan buried as became a soldier in the old kirkyard—our own ancestral burying-place—was my dear brother Ranulph!" exclaimed Lord Rohallion, with a sudden gush of affection



and emotion ; “ and ’tis his boy we have so loved and protected, Winny ! Poor Ranulph—poor Ranulph ! I should like to have looked on your handsome and honest face once again ere it was laid in the grave ; but it could not be, for I was absent. Madame, do you know that his drowned corpse was carried forth by his father’s people from the gate of the house in which he was born, and every room of which has echoed to his voice in boyhood, and past the very haunts in which we played together, under the old sycamores of the avenue, by the Lollards’ Linn and the Kelpie’s Pool, on the Girvan Water. Thank God, poor Ranulph, you found a grave at last among your own people, and where your forefathers lie ; but we have much to make amends for,” added the old Lord, as he placed Flora’s hand in that of Quentin ; “ may you both live long to enjoy all the happiness you deserve ; and be assured that my last prayer will be for both of you !”

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What follows ?

Orange wreaths and snow-white satin dresses, kid gloves and wedding favours, compliments and kisses, a marriage settlement and so forth, were all the subjects for mature consideration ere long at Minden Lodge ; and within a month Quentin *Crawford*—he had to change his name, as well as Flora—departed with his bride to spend the



honeymoon among the green summer woods and purple heather braes of Rohallion ; and joyful indeed was the salute that pealed from the guns on the battery—whilome those of La Bonne Citoyenne under the direction of the old quartermaster, who concluded by a general salvo that scared the rooks from the keep, sent the seabirds screaming in flocks to the Partan Craig, and made the dominie jump a yard high in his square-toed shoes ; and red and rousing were the bonfires that blazed on the old castle rock and on the heights of Ardgour in honour of the day.

Cosmo, we have said, was enjoying the seclusion and safety from duns afforded by the fortress of Verdun, where we have no wish to disturb him.

Monkton, long since retired upon full pay as colonel, is still one of the most popular members of the Caledonian U.S. Club ; but poor old Middleton died a lieutenant-general some years ago, near his native place, the secluded village of the Stennis, in Lothian. The old watch, which was the providential means of saving his life in action, he never had repaired ; but it always hung above his mantelpiece with the bullet in it, for he said that no clock in the land could ever remind him so well of time and eternity.

Donna Isidora accompanied the French troops to Paris, and made a tremendous sensation as a Spanish opera-dancer. In London she became

the rage, and, as *La Fille de l'Air*, her benefits were ably puffed and conducted by her secretary, whose name always figured in the bills as El Senor Trevino.

Old John Girvan "sleeps the sleep that knows no waking" in the green kirkyard of Rohallion; but he lived to dandle a young Quentin on his knee, and to hear the dominie teach a little Flora to lisp her first letters under the old oak-trees of Ardgour.

Eugene de Ribeaupierre, now one of the generals of the *second* Empire, has lived to lead his division of cavalry at Inkerman and the Tchernaya, at Solferino and Magenta, as bravely as ever his father did at Corunna, at Austerlitz, or Smolensko, in the wars of Napoleon the First.

THE END.











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